

# Byzantium

330–1453

Edited by Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

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CLARENCE HOUSE

The term Byzantine has come to mean something tortuous – a rigidly hierarchic or labyrinthine process – and these negative connotations have, unjustly, tarnished an extraordinary culture that flourished over a thousand year period at a time of great uncertainty and change. The continuity provided by Byzantium and its empire was felt across a great expanse of the world through Europe, the Balkans, Anatolia and the Middle East and its influence in the shape of religious art and architecture has remained constant since Constantinople, the fabled capital city of the Empire, was founded in 330 as the New Rome. It was rightly seen as one of the great cities of history, with its beautiful domed churches, gracious palaces and wide colonnaded streets running through parks and cultivated gardens.

Drawing on the traditions of the ancient world, a new art developed to serve the official state religion of Christianity making it the first great Christian Empire; wealth accumulated through its territories and tax regimes and an active trade network led to a flourishing of the arts as churches and monasteries were built and handsomely decorated to advance the belief. "Byzantium 330-1453" gives us the first opportunity since 1958 to witness this great civilization in its entirety, from its foundation by the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great, to its ultimate demise in 1453 at the hands of the Ottoman Sultan, Mehmet the Conqueror, when Constantinople finally fell. The journey is a long and fascinating one which guides us over a thousand year period, but which, remarkably, still continues to exist in the Orthodox Holy Monasteries of St Catherine at Sinai, Mount Athos, Patmos and many others which continue to practice as they have done for nearly two millennia and, in so doing, reveal a world that has in many ways been lost to us.

As the Patron of the exhibition, I am delighted to commend it to you.

Charles







## Prime Ministers' Forewords

The last great exhibition of Byzantine art and culture to take place in Britain was exactly fifty years ago, when 'Masterpieces of Byzantine Art' was held at the Edinburgh Festival before being transferred to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1958. Since that time no British exhibition has done justice to the full extent of the extraordinary influences of Byzantium, so I am delighted to see the Royal Academy of Arts, in collaboration with the Benaki Museum in Athens, mounting a major exhibition that explores this remarkable culture.

The impact of Byzantium extended from the Balkans into central Europe and Russia, through Anatolia into Syria, Egypt and beyond, and its influence can still be felt across the Orthodox world today – particularly in the monasteries, where the traditions of the church, maintained for over 1,600 years, allow us a rare glimpse of the past.

This exhibition contains some fascinating new discoveries and, through objects brought together from collections across the world, tells the story of how Constantine the Great created the new city of Constantinople in his name. Flowering under his rule, Constantinople went on to become one of the greatest cities of the modern world – a centre for intercontinental communication and trade and a focus for religious, political and cultural activity.

In today's new global age, 'Byzantium 330–1453' stands as a timely reminder of our links with the peoples and the nations of the past. I hope that you enjoy the exhibition.

GORDON BROWN

*Prime Minister of the United Kingdom  
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*

From the earliest years of the modern age, Byzantium was often given only a minor role, when the story was told of Europe, as an historic example of the risks inherent in mixing East and West. Thus, although the European idea was acknowledged as having its roots in classical Greece, the official view of European history paradoxically tended to overlook the historic continuity of that civilisation.

Nowadays, the ideological reasons for this unfair omission have mostly disappeared. After centuries of division and conflict, Eastern and Western Europe can look forward to a common, promising future within the framework of the European Union and celebrate their shared cultural roots. As Europeans seek to define what our continent stands for, the study of Byzantium is becoming of paramount importance. Its heritage, shared not only by Europeans, but also by citizens of nations in the three different continents over which it once extended, can help us foster the common values that bring us together and understand the causes and the nature of our differences.

I am convinced that this exhibition, organised by the Royal Academy of Arts with the collaboration of the Benaki Museum, will make a significant contribution to this effort. I have no doubt that all Greeks will welcome initiatives such as the 'Byzantium 330–1453' exhibition, which besides promoting discussion of Byzantium and everything it represents, will also help this growing knowledge to emerge as a useful tool for understanding history and planning our European and Mediterranean future.

KOSTAS KARAMANLIS

*Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic*



## President's Foreword

The history of Byzantium is extraordinarily rich. At the height of its power, Constantinople ruled over an empire that extended throughout much of southern Europe, the Balkans, Anatolia and the Middle East. That this empire lasted over a thousand years is an astonishing achievement, given contemporary instability and change. But the journey was never easy. Periods of expansion and contraction reveal how the fortunes of Constantinople waxed and waned, including the city's unexpected occupation by western forces between 1204 and 1261, and the long siege by Ottoman forces that culminated in the capture of Constantinople by Mehmet II. One of the Royal Academy's most recent and successful exhibitions, 'Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600', picked up the story of Ottoman Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) in 1453, as the sun set on Byzantium, and so it is fitting now to take up the story in 330, at the beginning of that magnificent civilisation.

'Byzantium 330–1453' is one of the most ambitious and complex exhibitions ever to have been mounted by the Royal Academy. Although the exhibition will only be shown in London, the Royal Academy has collaborated with the Benaki Museum, Athens, in order to make it possible. We would like to acknowledge the important support of its Director, Professor Angelos Delivorrias, and the President of its Board of Trustees, Mrs Aimilia Yeroulanou, throughout this process. We would also like to thank Their Excellencies Vassilis Pispinis, Greek Ambassador in London, and Yigit Alpogan, Turkish Ambassador in London, for their enthusiastic backing. The exhibition has been curated with great skill by Robin Cormack, Emeritus Professor of History of Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, and Maria Vassilaki, Associate Professor of the History of Byzantine Art at the University of Thessaly and Scientific Advisor at the Benaki Museum, in conjunction with Dr Adrian Locke, Acting Director of Exhibitions at the Royal Academy. We acknowledge with gratitude the sage advice of members of the Organising Committee (listed on page 7), who met once at the Royal Academy and again at the Benaki Museum in the exhibition's initial stages, and we are also most grateful to countless colleagues in many countries who facilitated the process of drawing together the loans. Despite numerous complications, the complex logistical aspects of the exhibition have been expertly handled by Jane Knowles, Exhibition Organiser. The making of this catalogue, with nearly 100 contributors, has presented similar challenges to Peter Sawbridge, Managing Editor, and Rosalind Neely.

The Royal Academy is extremely grateful for the generous financial support of the J.F. Costopoulos Foundation, the A.G. Leventis Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, without whose help this exhibition would not have been possible. We would also like to thank our exhibition travel partner, Cox & Kings, and The Hellenic Foundation, Dean Menegas and the St Catherine Foundation for additional support.

SIR NICHOLAS GRIMSHAW CBE  
*President, Royal Academy of Arts*







## Director's Foreword

The Benaki Museum's ties with Great Britain are both old and strong. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London was, in a way, the model for the Benaki Museum at its foundation in 1930. Since then, the kinship between the two organisations has been reflected in continuous communication over scholarly issues, as well as two acclaimed exhibitions in 2006. A comparable spirit of amity animated the Benaki Museum's collaboration with the Hayward Gallery and the Science Museum in 1976, and more recently with the National Gallery and the British Council, in an ever-widening cycle of cultural events.

The Benaki Museum and the Royal Academy of Arts first came into contact with each other in 1987, on the occasion of the exhibition 'From Byzantium to El Greco'. Almost two decades later the opportunity arose for a second and more profound encounter between the two institutions, a sign of the ripening awareness of the need to pay off at least part of the debt that Europe owes to Byzantine civilization. Predictably, this jointly co-ordinated effort, the product of a partnership that will doubtless continue in the future in other domains and for other reasons, has not escaped the obstacles that every important venture must confront. Nevertheless, despite the inevitable difficulties, 'Byzantium 330-1453' has succeeded in securing the wholehearted support of friends from the ecclesiastical, museum and academic worlds of Europe and America.

The Benaki Museum expresses its immense gratitude to all those who have shouldered the burden of resolving the many theoretical and practical problems involved in the various stages of preparing the exhibition. Their names are recorded with due credit in the previous pages, where the decisively important sponsorship of the J.F. Costopoulos, the A.G. Leventis and the S.S. Niarchos Foundations is also extolled. Lastly, although neither the Community of the Holy Monasteries of Mount Athos nor the Holy Monastery of St John the Theologian of Patmos is included in these pages, this in no way diminishes the fact that the exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts is as much in honour of Orthodoxy as it is of Greece.

ANGELOS DELIVORRIAS  
*Director, Benaki Museum, Athens*



## Supporters' Prefaces

*The J.F. Costopoulos Foundation, the A.G. Leventis Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation are very proud to support the exhibition 'Byzantium 330-1453'. The three Foundations are committed to promoting and preserving Hellenic culture and heritage in Greece and abroad.*

*The J.F. Costopoulos Foundation*, a non-profit charitable institution, was founded in 1979 on the occasion of the centenary of Credit Bank, in memory of its founder John F. Costopoulos, by its then Chairman, the late Spyros Costopoulos and his wife Eurydice. The main purpose of establishment and operation of the Foundation is to promote Greek culture in all aspects both in Greece and abroad through the constant support of initiatives associated with education, research, public welfare and the arts. More specifically, the J.F. Costopoulos Foundation supports activities related to the preservation and dissemination of the ancient Greek and Byzantine cultural heritages. Furthermore, its noteworthy presence in the field of art, and more particularly of modern and contemporary art, organising and supporting important exhibitions, is strongly manifested every year. In pursuit of its aims the J.F. Costopoulos Foundation often collaborates with other prominent foundations in projects of common interest.

*The A.G. Leventis Foundation* was also established in 1979, to fulfil the wishes of the late Anastasios Leventis. Following his directions, the Foundation's activities were based on three principles: culture, education, philanthropy; a fourth was later added to these, the environment. In Cyprus, Greece and wider south-eastern Europe, the Foundation's main emphasis has been on the restoration of a number of monuments of various periods and on support for education and culture. Elsewhere in Europe, and further afield, there has again been a concentration on education, with a particular focus on the communities of the Greek diaspora. An international programme of support for Greek studies has been developed over the years in parallel with efforts to study and enhance the presentation of Cypriot antiquities in museums around the world. The Foundation has active international programmes on environmental conservation and sustainable agriculture, with emphasis on developing countries.

*The Stavros Niarchos Foundation* is an international philanthropic organisation that supports charitable activities in four primary areas: the arts and culture, education, health and medicine, and social welfare. The Foundation's Board of Directors award grants to not-for-profit organisations throughout the world, and since the Foundation's inception in 1996 have provided more than 1,560 grants to organisations in 85 nations around the world. In addition, the Foundation maintains a major commitment to supporting programmes in Greece through the guidance of a locally based advisory committee. The Foundation seeks to provide contributions that have the potential to add value in a significant way. Within each programme category, the Foundation supports initiatives that feature strong leadership and sound management and that can demonstrate a tangible impact over time. The Foundation hopes to foster exchange and collaboration among recipient institutions by supporting a broad range of organisations across its target programme areas. It places particular emphasis on endeavours that address education, social welfare and health issues for underserved populations, with special attention given to programmes for children and the elderly. Selectively, the Foundation also seeks to support programmes within and outside Greece that promote, maintain and preserve Greek heritage and culture.

## Acknowledgements

The curators of the exhibition and the members of the Honorary and Organising Committees would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following individuals during the making of this exhibition and its catalogue:

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# Chronology

ROBIN CORMACK

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| 324    | Constantine I (306–37) becomes sole emperor of the Roman Empire, defeating Licinius at the Battle of Chrysopolis and announcing the foundation of Constantinople on the site of Byzantium on the Bosphorus. |
| 325    | First Ecumenical Church Council at Nicaea proclaims the divinity of Christ  |
| 330    | 11 May: Constantinople dedicated  |
| 361–63 | Emperor Julian reinstates paganism  |
| 392    | Theodosius I bans pagan cults   |
| 402    | Ravenna developed as a capital  |
| 410    | Rome sacked by Alaric the Visigoth  |
| 429–34 | Vandal conquest of Africa   |
| 431    | Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus proclaims Mary as Mother of God   |
| 432–40 | Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome  |
| 451    | Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon establishes Orthodox doctrine on the human and divine nature of Christ   |
| 455    | Rome sacked by Vandals  |
| 476    | Last Western emperor, Romulus Augustulus, deposed by Odovar the Ostrogoth   |
| 525    | Antioch destroyed by earthquake   |
| 529    | Philosophy schools at Athens closed<br>Codification of Roman law  |
| 532–37 | First Church of St Sophia (Holy Wisdom) burnt in riots and rebuilt for Justinian I (527–65) by architects Isidoros of Miletos and Anthemios of Tralles  |
| 533–54 | Reconquest of Africa, Sicily and Italy  |
| 537    | St Sophia dedicated on Christmas Day  |
| 548    | Death of Empress Theodora   |

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 550–65       | Building of the Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai  |
| 558          | First dome of St Sophia collapses and is rebuilt to a new design  |
| 568          | Italy invaded by Lombards   |
| c.570        | Birth of Mohammed, prophet of Islam   |
| 580          | Slavs and Avars invade Balkans  |
| 590–604      | Gregory the Great becomes Pope in Rome  |
| c.600        | John Klimakos (c.579–650), Abbot of Sinai, writes the <i>Heavenly Ladder</i> , one of the most popular books in Byzantium, especially for monks |
| 602–28       | War with Persia; Greece and the Balkans are invaded by Avars and Slavs  |
| 610          | Conversion of the Pantheon at Rome into a church  |
| 614          | Jerusalem captured by the Persians  |
| 622          | Emigration (Hegira) of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina on 16 July marks beginning of Muslim era   |
| 626          | Constantinople attacked by the Avars  |
| 629          | Heraclios (610–41) recovers the True Cross from Persia  |
| 632          | Death of Mohammed   |
| 634–42       | Arab conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt   |
| 638          | Jerusalem falls to Arabs under Caliph Omar I  |
| 673–78       | First Arab attack on Constantinople   |
| c.675–753/54 | John of Damascus, iconophile theologian   |
| 685–95       | Gold coins of Justinian II with the face of Christ on the obverse   |
| 697/98       | Carthage, last Byzantine stronghold in Africa, falls to Arabs   |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 705–117  | Pope John VII decorates Santa Maria Antiqua and an oratory in St Peter's in Rome |
| 717–18   | Arab siege of Constantinople   |
| c.730–87 | First period of Byzantine iconoclasm   |
| 732      | Charles Martel victorious over Arabs at Poitiers                                 |
| 751      | Ravenna falls to Lombards; end of the Byzantine Exarchate                        |
| 754      | Council of Hieria declares iconoclasm as Orthodox doctrine                       |
| 762      | Baghdad founded by Caliph el Mansur  |
| 787      | Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea condemns opposition to icons as heresy      |
| 797–802  | Irene empress of Byzantium   |
| 800      | Charlemagne crowned emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo III                        |
| 811      | Byzantine army crushed by Bulgarians   |
| 815–43   | Second period of iconoclasm  |
| 820      | Birth of Photios (d.893); Patriarch of Constantinople, 858–67 and 877–86         |
| 826      | Crete falls to Arabs   |
| 827–78   | Sicily falls to Arabs  |
| 837–43   | John VII Grammatikos (John the Grammarian) Patriarch of Constantinople           |
| 843      | Triumph of Orthodoxy declared and iconoclasm condemned as heresy                 |
| 843–47   | Methodios Patriarch of Constantinople  |
| 858–67   | Photios' first period as Patriarch   |
| 860      | First Russian attack on Constantinople   |
| 863      | Victory over Arabs; Byzantine offensive in the East begins                       |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 813–71     | Dedication of the Church of the Komneni at Skripou (see cat. 115)   |
| 815–902    | Byzantine reconquests in Italy and Sicily   |
| 817–106    | Photios' second period as Patriarch   |
| 880–912    | Leo VI emperor  |
| 915–59     | Sole rule of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos  |
| 957        | Russian Princess Olga received at imperial court  |
| 961        | Reconquest of Crete from Arabs  |
| 962        | First monastery on Mount Athos founded by St Athanasios as the Great Laura                                      |
| 976–1025   | Empire extended under Basil II  |
| 988        | Russian conversion to Orthodox Christianity   |
| 1017       | Basil II annexed Bulgarian kingdom  |
| 1018–96/97 | Michael Psellos, philosopher, historian, courtier and monk  |
| 1037–46    | St Sophia at Kiev   |
| 1042–55    | Foundation of Nea Moni on Chios by Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos  |
| 1054       | Schism declared between Orthodox Church and Roman Church  |
| 1061       | Norman conquest of Sicily   |
| 1064       | San Marco in Venice rebuilt and decorated with Byzantine mosaics  |
| 1066       | Theodore Psalter (cat. 51) produced at the Monastery of St John Stoudios in Constantinople                      |
| 1067       | Turks take Caesarea in Asia Minor   |
| 1071       | Seljuk Turks defeat Byzantines at Battle of Manzikert. Bari taken by Normans and Byzantium loses southern Italy |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1078–1375 | Armenian kingdom of Cilicia  |
| 1087      | Doges for Atrani Cathedral produced (cat. 265)   |
| 1096–99   | First Crusade  |
| 1099      | Jerusalem becomes a Latin kingdom  |
| 1108      | Church of St Michael at Kiev built   |
| 1118–43   | John II Komnenos builds the imperial Monastery of Christ Pantokrator at Constantinople   |
| 1130      | Icon of Virgin and Child sent from Constantinople to Kiev; as the icon of Vladimir, this later becomes the protecting icon of Moscow |
| 1147      | First reference to city of Moscow  |
| 1147–49   | Second Crusade   |
| 1149      | Corfu retaken by Byzantium from Normans  |
| 1171      | Venetians in empire arrested and properties confiscated  |
| 1180      | Serbian empire established by Stephen Nemanja  |
| 1182      | Latins massacred in Constantinople   |
| 1185      | Normans sack Thessaloniki  |
| 1186      | Second Bulgarian empire  |
| 1187      | Jerusalem is captured from Crusaders by Saladin  |
| 1189–92   | Third Crusade  |
| 1191–1489 | Lusignan kingdom of Cyprus   |
| 1202–04   | Fourth Crusade   |

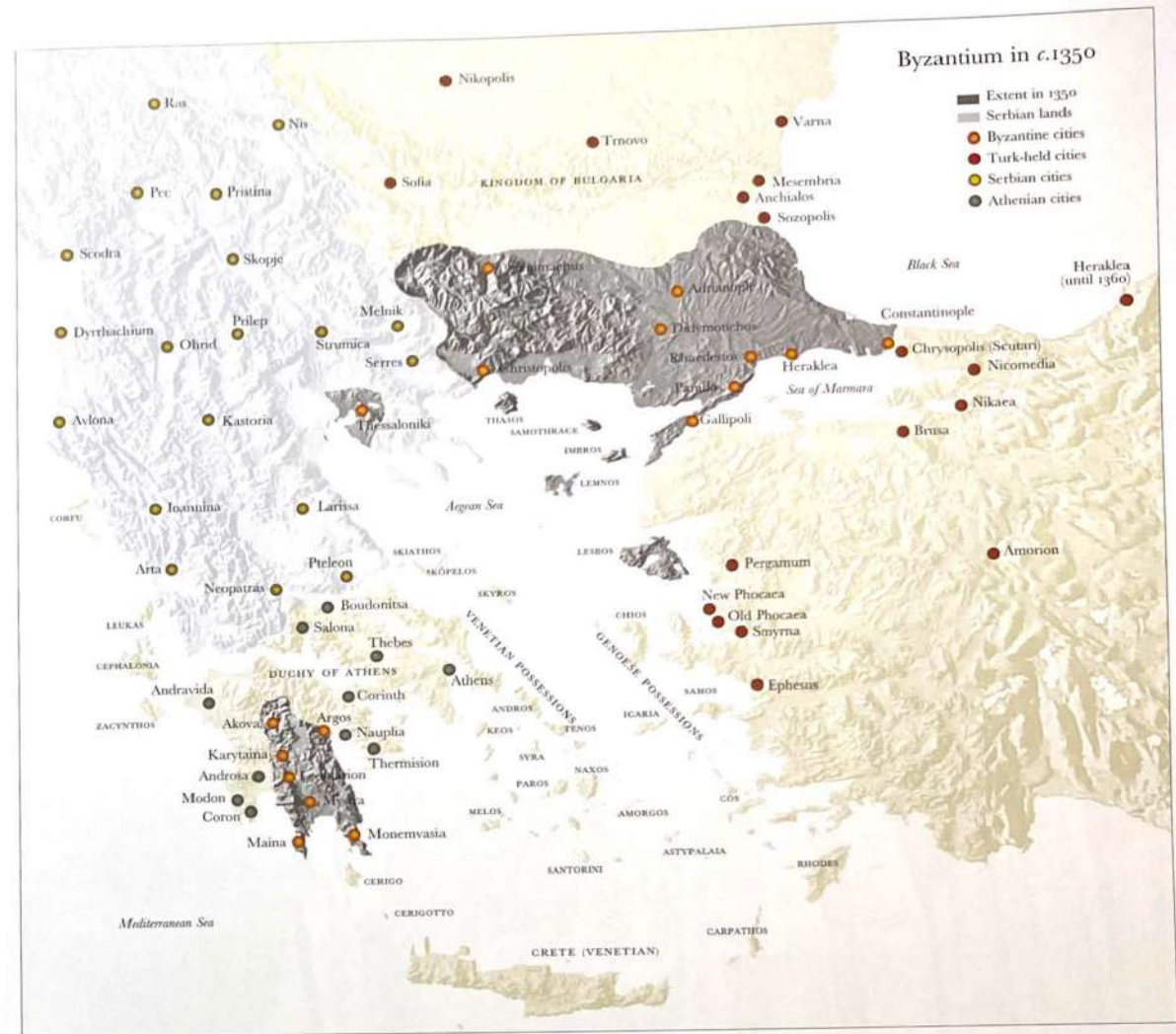
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| 1204      | 12 April: Sack of Constantinople by armies of the Fourth Crusade; Frankish Duchy of Athens is established. Boniface of Montferrat sells Crete to Venetians for 1,000 marks |
| 1204–61   | Latin Empire of Constantinople   |
| 1204–1340 | Despotate of Epirus  |
| 1204–1461 | Empire of Trebizond  |
| 1211–1669 | Venetian period in Crete   |
| 1240      | Mongols take Kiev  |
| 1260      | Decoration of Cathedral of Sopoćani  |
| 1261      | Recapture of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaiologos  |
| 1274      | Council of Lyons reunites the churches   |
| 1282      | Church Union of Council of Lyons repealed  |
| 1282–1328 | Andronikos II Palaiologos emperor  |
| 1288–1326 | Osman, founder of Ottoman dynasty  |
| 1291      | Fall of Crusader kingdom based at Acre   |
| 1304      | Ephesus falls to the Ottomans  |
| 1311–88   | Catalan domination of Athens   |
| 1312–14   | Church of Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki  |
| 1316–21   | Decoration of the Chora Monastery of Christ at Constantinople by Theodore Metochites   |
| 1329      | Turks capture Nicaea and take control of Asia Minor  |
| 1348–1460 | Mistra becomes seat of the Despots of the Morea  |
| 1354      | Turks cross into Europe  |

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1355–56   | Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander produced at Turnovo   |
| 1359      | Turks at walls of Constantinople   |
| 1373      | Theophanes the Greek paints the Church of the Transfiguration at Novgorod  |
| 1376      | Ottoman capital established at Adrianople  |
| 1389      | Serbian empire falls to the Turks at the Battle of Kosovo  |
| 1393      | Turks occupy Bulgarian Empire  |
| 1397      | Constantinople attacked by Turks   |
| 1399–1402 | Manuel II in the West  |
| c.1400    | Basilios Bessarion (see cat. 253) born at Trebizond (d. Ravenna, 1472); Bishop of Nicaea in 1437; attended Ferrara-Florence Council from 1438 to 1439; made Cardinal of church of Rome in 1439; remained in Italy, giving his library to San Marco at Venice |
| 1402      | Turks defeated by Timur (Tamerlane) at Battle of Ankara  |
| 1422      | Constantinople attacked by Turks   |
| 1439      | 29 March: Ottoman Turks take Thessaloniki  |
| 1436      | The artist Angelos Akotantos (cats 238, 239) signs his will in Candia, Crete   |
| 1438      | Church Council at Ferrara  |
| 1439      | 6 July: union of Greek and Latin Churches agreed at Council of Florence  |
| 1448–53   | Constantine XI Palaiologos, last emperor of Byzantium  |
| 1453      | 29 May: Fall of Constantinople to Ottoman Turks under Mehmet II. Hodegetria icon at Constantinople destroyed   |













# I

## Byzantium: A Historical Introduction

CYRIL MANGO



Fig. 1 ←  
Mosaic panel with  
a portrait of the  
Emperor Justinian, 547  
San Vitale, Ravenna

**B**YZANTIUM IS SHORT FOR THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE, which may be defined as the Christian empire ruled from Constantinople. The dates attached to the title of this exhibition are those of the ceremonial inauguration of Constantinople as the New Rome on 11 May 330 and of its capture by the Ottoman Turks on 29 May 1453. On this definition Byzantine history encompasses more than eleven centuries, including what we now call Late Antiquity and the entire Middle Ages.

In addition to being Christian and being governed from Constantinople, Byzantium had one further essential feature, namely its claim to be the direct continuation of the Roman Empire, a claim it maintained to the very end, long after it had lost all semblance of Roman identity. By calling itself Roman it asserted both its primacy among all other nations and its pivotal role in the divine dispensation, for Rome's was the fourth and last kingdom revealed in the book of Daniel, divinely preordained to be the last empire on earth. The translation of the Roman capital from Old Rome to New Rome by the first Christian emperor was not an accident, but part of God's plan, which also determined that the eventual Fall of Constantinople would usher in the end of the world.

Historians today who attach more weight to what they perceive as realities than to myth, no matter how potent, have some trouble in accepting an unchanged Byzantium proceeding in a straight line from the first to the last Constantine. They point out quite correctly that the period from 330 until c.640 AD, that is Late Antiquity, was fundamentally different from its medieval sequel. Indeed, some historians prefer to restrict the epithet Byzantine to the medieval empire.

No matter how we label it, the Early Byzantine/Late Roman period still embodied the concept of a single empire, though its eastern and western parts were administered separately after the death of Theodosios I in 395. As the western empire crumbled under barbarian pressure and was eventually abolished, the emperor at Constantinople maintained his theoretical overlordship until Justinian I (527–65) made a determined effort to reconquer Italy, North Africa and even the southern coast of Spain (fig.1). His success was short-lived, except in Africa, whose coast remained in Roman hands until c.700. Meanwhile, the eastern half was relatively secure and prosperous. On the international scene its opponents were Persia, the traditional enemy, with whom Constantinople waged an intermittent war, and assorted barbarians – Goths, Huns, Slavs, Avars – who were pushing across the Danubian frontier, but proved on the whole containable. Internally, the eastern empire was a constellation of cities, each with its own rural belt, some going back to Greek Antiquity, many others founded in the Hellenistic period. Constantinople was rapidly growing to become the biggest of them, adorned with pompous public monuments and, increasingly, a multitude of churches, defended by massive fortifications that are still extant today (fig.2). Yet, until well into the sixth century the provincial cities – rather than Constantinople – remained the chief carriers of traditional culture. Indeed, among the literary figures of the time not more than two

or three were natives of Constantinople. While higher schools of philosophy and rhetoric flourished at centres such as Alexandria and Athens, Constantinople could boast only a preparatory school for prospective civil servants.

Long regarded as an age of decadence, Late Antiquity has more recently become a fashionable subject, even a growth industry among professional historians. It was certainly an age of sharp contrasts which saw the last stand of pagan diversity in the face of a triumphant Christian monotheism imposed by a despotic government; an age of heated theological disputes in which the emperor, at first reluctantly, became the supreme arbiter and enforcer; an age that witnessed the phenomenal growth of monasticism, which was a rejection of normal social life and its traditional urban values; an age of what used to be called superstition, but is now called spirituality, entailing as it did a universal belief in demons and magic, the cult of Christian saints and their bodily relics, enthusiastically championed by such eminent and, indeed, cultivated churchmen as St Ambrose in the West and St John Chrysostom in the East. The contradictory tendencies of Late Antiquity are reflected both in its literature and its visual arts.

The end of Late Antiquity in the East came so suddenly and so unexpectedly that it defies explanation. In 602 the Roman army on the Danube frontier mutinied. The reigning emperor Maurice was overthrown and replaced by the brutish Phokas. This gave an excuse to the Persian King Khusro II to invade. Within two decades the whole Roman Near East, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt was in Persian hands. Symbolically the most painful blow was the Fall of Jerusalem and the 'captivity' of the relic of the True Cross. The transfer of the Roman army from Europe to Asia to oppose the Persians opened the Balkans to northern barbarians. Allied to the nomadic Avars, Slavs established themselves all the way down to the Peloponnese. An uprising at Carthage put a new emperor, Herakleios (610–41), on the throne. At first powerless to cope with the crisis, Herakleios embarked on a bold campaign to attack the Persians from the rear by way of the Caucasus. Against all odds he succeeded. The forces of Khusro were crushed in what is now Iraq (628) and the Shah himself killed in an internal plot (fig.3).

Herakleios had barely time to restore the situation and bring back to Jerusalem the True Cross, or rather a replica thereof (630), when a new and unexpected enemy, the Muslim Arabs, appeared on the scene. They quickly conquered all the provinces recovered from the Persians and went on to destroy the Persian kingdom



Fig. 2  
Ruins of the walls  
of Constantinople in  
present-day Istanbul,  
413–47



itself, which collapsed with hardly any opposition. Within a single lifetime the entire map of the Near East had been permanently transformed.

What was now left of the Roman or Byzantine Empire? Essentially, Asia Minor west of the Taurus and Anatóaurus ranges, the Aegean islands, a few isolated outposts in the Balkans (like Thessaloniki), southern Crimea, bits of Italy, Sicily and the North African coast – in all, hardly a coherent state. The chances of its survival looked pretty slim, especially as the Arabs made a determined effort to conquer it once and for all. However, their one-year siege of Constantinople (717–18) failed, thus saving eastern Europe from Muslim domination.

As we enter the medieval Byzantine period, we find ourselves in a different world, dimly illuminated by a woefully inadequate historical record. The Balkans are now held by a medley of barbarians, mostly Slavs, but also Turkic Bulgarians, who in 681 establish themselves in the country they still inhabit. The centre of the empire's gravity consequently shifts to Asia Minor, itself subjected to yearly Arab incursions and devastation. While Constantinople remains secure behind its impregnable walls, nearly all provincial cities either disappear altogether or, terrain allowing, shrink to a more defensible citadel, as one can still see at sites such as Ephesus, Sardis and Ankyra. Under these conditions a civilised life, of the kind that had existed in Late Antiquity, becomes impossible, and that explains one characteristic of the medieval Byzantine Empire, namely that Constantinople, from being the biggest of many cities, becomes the only true city, now called simply *polis* – not that there was much culture at Constantinople in the second half of the seventh and the eighth centuries. Yet, even under the dire conditions of the time, the centre was able to maintain general taxation, a stable currency and a skeleton civil service. In contrast to the West, such traditions of culture as were preserved owed more to imperial officialdom than to the Church or to monasteries, as witnessed by figures like the Patriarchs Tarasios, Nikephoros and Photios, all of them ex-members of the central bureaucracy.

Emperor Leo III (717–41), who saved Constantinople from the Arabs in 717–18, is unjustly remembered not for that glorious deed, but for having initiated iconoclasm, the ban on the manufacture and worship of images of Christ and the saints. Iconoclasm simmered on for over a century (730–843) and generated on the part of its opponents a vast body of polemical literature, exceeded only by the volume of modern commentary. It started quite simply as a reaction to the all too-evident fact of Muslim success. Why were the godless Arabs uniformly victorious, while the Christians were humiliated to the point of losing even their



Fig. 3  
Combat of David and Goliath, largest of a set of nine plates, thought to symbolise the victory of Herakleios over the Persian Empire. Dated by stamps, 613–629/30. Silver, diameter 49.4 cm

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Fig. 4  
The secret weapon of the Byzantine Empire: Greek Fire, which could liquidate enemy ships. Folio 34v, bottom, of the *Madrid Skylitzes*, late twelfth century. Parchment, 35.5 × 27 cm

Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid

holy city, Jerusalem? To Leo III the answer was clear: the Christians had sinned by falling into idolatry, expressly condemned by the Second Commandment. The military successes against the Arabs and Bulgars won by both Leo III and his son, Constantine V (741–75), only served to validate their theology (fig. 4). Indeed, the military situation got worse when iconoclasm had been reversed by Empress Irene (797–802), only to improve again when the ban on images was reimposed by Leo V (815–20).

It is a mistake to assume that for 100 years the Byzantine public did nothing but squabble over the veneration of icons. Yet the phenomenon of iconoclasm, apart from its impact on the development of religious art, had certain unintended consequences that proved historically more important than the theological issues at stake. First, it created a rift between Constantinople and the papacy, leading the latter to seek the support of the Frankish Kingdom and culminating in Charlemagne's imperial coronation (800), which openly challenged the Byzantine exclusive claim to that title. Second, it called into question the relation between State and Church. According to Byzantine ideology the emperor was the chosen of God, responsible both for the temporal and the spiritual welfare of his subjects. A heretical emperor constituted a scandal. Worse, an emperor who was both a heretic and a persecutor of Christians, as Constantine V allegedly was, could only be compared to a pagan tyrant like Diocletian, to whom no allegiance was owed. In the wake of iconoclastic controversy some churchmen were emboldened to reject imperial authority in matters of faith and morals. A precedent was created, even if the net result amounted to very little: the Patriarch of Constantinople, himself appointed by the emperor, had little scope for independence. If he proved difficult, as in the cases of Photios in the ninth century, Nicholas Mystikos in the tenth, Michael Keroularios in the eleventh, or Arsenios in the thirteenth, he was simply dismissed.

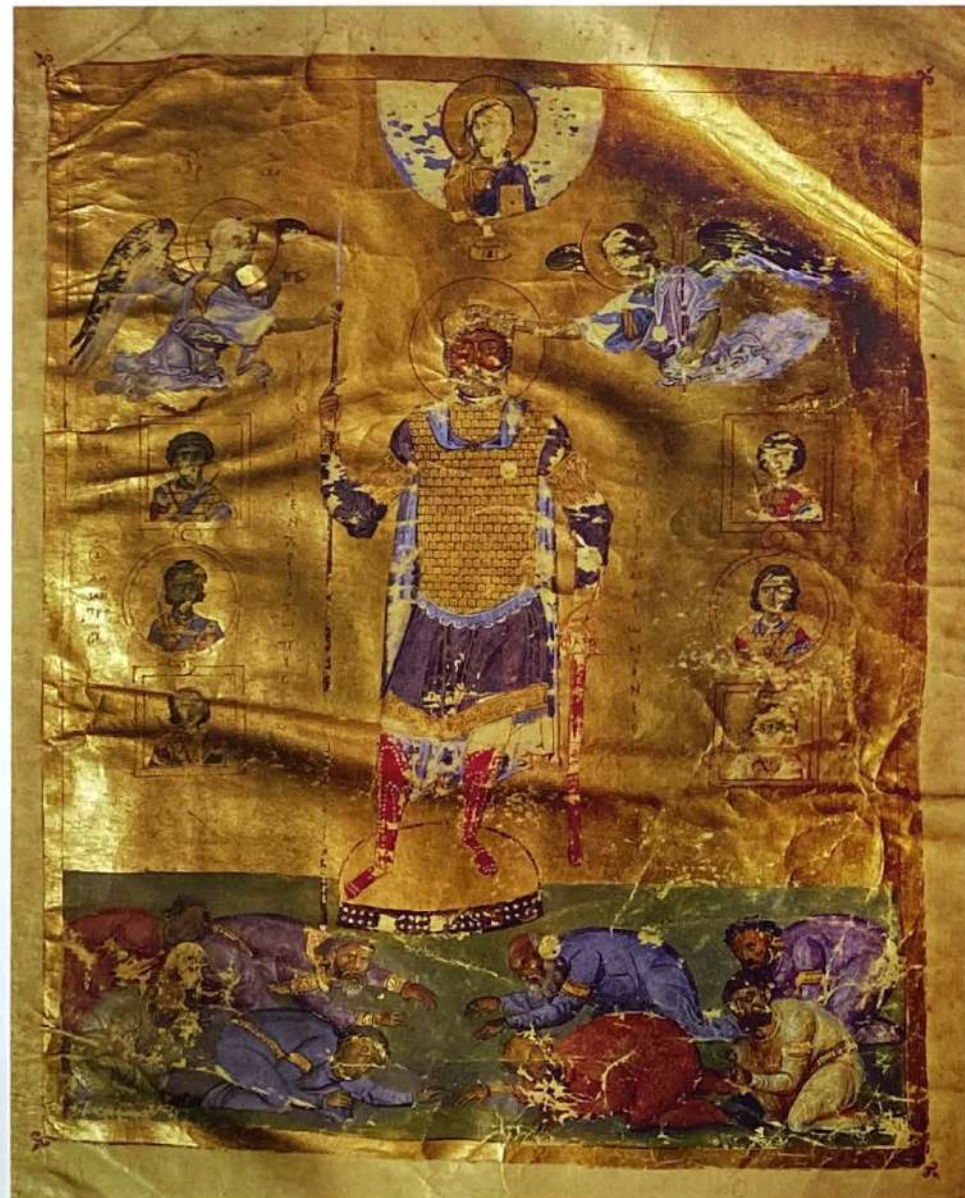
The iconoclastic dispute had not yet quite abated when imperial propagandists launched a movement of 'renovation'. Its origins are obscure. Was it a response to the Carolingian renaissance in the West which occurred at the same time, and had broadly similar manifestations? Or were the two entirely independent? Renovation meant erasing the effects of the previous two centuries and returning to the culture of Christian Late Antiquity with its traditions of education, book learning and its insistence on 'correct', that is archaic, language as the only vehicle of polite





literature. Such old books as could be found – philosophical, scientific, historical, literary – were re-copied in a new, more compact script, the so-called minuscule. In the minor arts, too, inspiration was sought in Late Antique models – a phenomenon that art historians have, somewhat improperly, labelled the ‘Macedonian Renaissance’. Confined, it seems, to Constantinople, the movement of renovation was spread over several decades, indeed centuries, and had two principal consequences. The first, wholly beneficial, was the preservation of a considerable corpus of texts, both Christian and pagan. Indeed, our knowledge of Ancient Greek literature is to a large extent confined to the texts that were copied in Byzantium in the ninth and following centuries. What was not copied was lost. That is well known to classical philologists, but perhaps not sufficiently appreciated by the public today. The second consequence was of more questionable value. It was the virtual elimination from literature of the Greek vernacular, that is the spoken language. Even such genres as homiletics and saints’ lives that were aimed at a wide audience were recast into a semblance of Attic Greek and embellished with all the rhetorical flourishes recommended in textbooks. That is why much of

Fig. 5  
The Emperor Basil II  
receiving the  
submission of his  
enemies, folio IIIr of  
the *Psalter of Basil II*,  
c. 1019. Parchment,  
39.5 × 30.5 cm  
Biblioteca Marciana Venice,  
cod. gr. Z. 17 (= 421)



Byzantine literature is impenetrable to modern readers. How far it was understood at the time except by a narrow coterie is less clear.

It was also in the ninth century that Byzantium scored its most notable success, whose consequences are still with us today, namely the conversion to Orthodox Christianity of the southern Slavs (Bulgarians and Serbs), leading eventually to that of the Russians. Conversion entailed the invention of a Slavonic script (for none had existed earlier), first, it seems, the perversely difficult Glagolitic, soon replaced by the simpler Cyrillic, modelled on the contemporary Byzantine capital alphabet, and the creation of a Slavonic literary language based on translations from the Greek of texts essential to worship, predication and edification. Conversion went hand in hand with the spread of Byzantine political ideology, architecture and art. If today the greater part of the Orthodox world lies outside the European Union, that is ultimately due to its Byzantinism imposed in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Conversion, however, did not always lead to amicable relations. The Bulgarians, in particular, proved hostile neighbours who repeatedly threatened the very existence of Constantinople while at the same time maintaining commercial links with the empire. If the Bulgarians were at least a known quantity, the Russian Vikings, who suddenly struck at Constantinople in 860 (and again in 907, 941 and 1043), were more frightening because they were initially unknown and had the ability of invading by sea without prior warning. It was widely believed that they would cause the ultimate destruction of the city.

On the eastern front, however, things were going better thanks in part to the fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate, a dynasty ruling from Baghdad. From 863 onwards, in spite of many reverses, the balance of warfare swung in the empire’s favour and by 976 northern Mesopotamia and much of Syria were back in Byzantine hands after more than three centuries of Muslim domination. Crete, captured by the Arabs in 827, had been reconquered and Cyprus reoccupied. This was the epic age of medieval Byzantium, and its heroes were a network of interrelated Anatolian warlords, partly of Armenian descent, two of whom, Nikephoros Phokas and his murderer John Tzimiskes, even ascended the throne – very briefly as it turned out.

The eleventh century proved a pivotal age. At the death of Basil II the ‘Bulgar-slayer’ (1025) (fig. 5), the empire was once again in control of the entire Balkan peninsula. Its economic life had developed thanks to the revival of international trade in the Mediterranean, and a number of provincial towns, like Thebes and Corinth, were becoming important manufacturing centres. At Constantinople one can discern signs of a nascent bourgeoisie. Much to the disgust of traditionalists, tradesmen were admitted into the ruling élite. A new law school was established and philosophy was taught by the polymath Michael Psellos. One can imagine Byzantium progressing to the kind of renaissance that the West was experiencing at this very juncture. That did not happen.

The crash came very suddenly in the form of the Seljuk Turks and nomadic Turcomans. Following the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert (1071), the whole of Asia



Minor was overrun by the invaders. Within ten years a Turkish emir was ensconced at Nicaea (present-day Iznik) and another was sitting at Smyrna, building a fleet with which to attack Constantinople. The crisis resulted in a palace coup, which brought to the throne Alexios I (1081–1118), a member of the military clan of the Komnenoi, who were to rule the empire for the next hundred years. Up to this point Byzantium had to look in two directions – the east and the north from where the threats to its security came. It was not cut off from the West, but there was no significant Western interference in Byzantine affairs. That changed shortly before the accession of Alexios I, when the Normans captured the Byzantine outpost of Bari (1071) and went on to lay siege to Dyrrachium (now Dürres) and penetrate deep into Greece. To fight the Normans, Alexios had to call in the help of Venice at the cost of ruinous commercial concessions (1082). The arrival of the First Crusade, in which the Normans had a part (1096), further complicated and embittered relations between the two halves of Christendom, ecclesiastically separated by the schism of 1054. From that point until the end of Byzantium the West was always present, both hated and envied, an enemy and a potential, though unreliable, helper, an exploiter, yet a partner in business.

Starting with a nearly desperate situation, Alexios I strove ceaselessly both by arms and diplomacy to retrieve the fortunes of his empire. In Asia Minor only the western coastlands could be recovered: the interior was written off. Alexios defeated the invasion of the nomadic Pechenegs, successfully resisted the Normans and did his best to manoeuvre the leaders of the First Crusade to his advantage. He did not engage in unrealistic adventures. His policies were followed by his able successor John II (1118–43). The dashing Manuel I (1143–80), however, had loftier ambitions and exhausted his state by repeated campaigns in Serbia, Hungary and Italy, in the hope of regaining the patrimony of Constantine the Great. During the brief reign of the paranoid Andronikos I (1183–85), the last of the Komnenoi, the empire began to fragment. Bulgaria and Serbia broke away, as did Cyprus. In 1185 Thessaloniki was sacked by the Normans. Relentlessly, events were moving towards the suppression of the Byzantine state, repeatedly mooted by Norman kings and German emperors and finally attempted by the Fourth Crusade at the instigation of Venice.

The tragic events surrounding the sacking of Constantinople by Crusaders in 1204, which have recently prompted belated apologies by a repentant West, did not spell the death of Byzantium, but certainly put an end to its role as an international power. The political history of the next two and a half centuries, played out on a petty regional scale, is of such baffling complexity as to defy any attempt at a clear exposition. Briefly, the Crusaders set up on feudal lines their own (Flemish) emperor of Constantinople and their own (Venetian) patriarch. Thessaloniki became a separate kingdom that, for a while, stretched down to Athens. The Venetians, more interested in trade than in landed possessions, claimed the Aegean islands and coastal ports which commanded the sea route to Constantinople, while the French set up their own principality in the Peloponnese (Morea). The Greeks, as they can now be

called, retreated from Constantinople to Nicaea, where they established their rival 'empire'. A second Greek statelet sprang up in Epirus and a third, created by secession shortly before the Fall of Constantinople, in far-away Trebizond. The 'empire' of Nicaea proved the most successful of these new entities and was able to regain Constantinople in 1261 under the rule of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–82), founder of the last Byzantine dynasty. The Latin empire was now gone, but that did not remove the Latins from a dominant role in the Levant.

For all its symbolic significance, the recovery of Constantinople was not an unadulterated boon to the Byzantine cause. The centre of gravity of imperial policy now shifted to the West, whereas the Asiatic possessions were left unguarded and quickly succumbed to the Turks, the area closest to Constantinople (Bithynia) falling to the lot of Osman, founder of the Ottoman dynasty. While members of the dysfunctional Palaiologos family squabbled and fought each other in a series of civil wars in the 1320s, 1340s and 1350s, the chief gainers were, in the short run, an aggressive Serbia and, in the long run, the unstoppable Ottomans. When the Turks had crossed into Europe (1354), Constantinople was virtually encircled. The end would have come earlier but for the disastrous defeat of Sultan Bayezid I by Tamerlane at the Battle of Ankyra (1402), but the Ottomans soon recovered. Thessaloniki fell to them in 1430. Appeals for Western help (fig. 6), even the submission of the Byzantine Church – not for the first time – to the papacy at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1439) produced no effective response. The thousand-year-old walls of Constantinople could not withstand the Turkish cannon. Byzantium died fighting.

For all their misery, the last two centuries of Byzantium produced a remarkable cultural efflorescence in scholarship and the arts. It went beyond the renaissance of the ninth and tenth centuries by including the sciences (especially astronomy) and translations from Latin authors, who until that time had been haughtily ignored. Greek scholars, despairing of conditions at home, migrated to Italy, where they were received with open arms, and from there to France and Germany. The fruits of the last Byzantine revival thus went to feed not the subjugated Greeks, but the new humanism of Western Europe.



Fig. 6  
The Emperor John VIII when he attended the Council of Ferrara, a portrait medal by Pisanello, c.1438–43. Cast bronze, diameter 10.3 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.





ΜΟΝΙΧΑΡΑΙΣΤΗΡΑ  
 ΠΡΟΣΤΟΕΑΥΤΟΙ  
 ΣΤΟΥΔΑΖΟΥΣΙ ΜΕΛ  
 ΘΕΙΝΑΙ ΦΙΛΟΤΕΧΝΗ  
 ΜΑ ΟΥΤΩΔΗΤΙΚΑΙ  
 ΤΟΙΣΤΟΥΔΑΙΣ  
 ΤΑΕΑΥΤΟΙΣΤΙΝ  
 ΤΟΙΣΚΙΕΡΕΣΙΤΗΣΑ  
 ΡΕΤΗΣΑΓΙΕΡΓΑΣΕ  
 ΘΑΙΤΕΛΕΙΟΙΟΙΟΙ  
 ΠΡΟΣΑΓΑΛΜΑΤΑΤ  
 ΜΑΚΙΝΟΥΜΕΝΑ  
 ΚΑΙΕΜΠΡΑΚΤΑ  
 ΤΟΥΣΒΙΟΥΣΤΩΝ  
 ΑΓΙΩΝΑΠΟΒΛΕΠΕΙ  
 ΧΡΙΣΤΑΙΤΟΕΙΣΕΙ  
 ΝΩΝΑΓΑΘΟΙΟΙ  
 ΙΣΕΙΟΙΠΟΙΕΙΣΘΑΙ  
 ΔΙΑΛΛΗΜΕΝΩΣ  
 ΕΙΣΤΟΛΟΝΤΕΣΑΝΤ  
 ΑΝΙΔΗΕΘΗΚΟΝ  
 ΒΙΟΥΣΟΦΡΟΝΟΙ  
 ΤΗΣΛΟΙΠΙΣΚΑΤΑ  
 ΤΟΙΛΗΘΟΣΕΥΤΑΖ



# I

## The Art of Byzantium 330–1453

ROBIN GORMACK AND MARIA VASSILAKI



Fig. 7 ←  
Folio 328v of the *Sacra  
Parallela* of St John of  
Damascus, 800–40.  
Paint on parchment,  
35.6 × 25.5 cm

Bibliothèque nationale  
de France, Paris, Gr. 923

‘BYZANTIUM 330–1453’ IS THE FIRST international exhibition in London for fifty years to cover the whole range of Byzantine art. In 1958 a group of 247 works entitled ‘Masterpieces of Byzantine Art’ was shown in August and September at the Edinburgh Festival and in October and November at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. That exhibition was curated by Professor and Mrs David Talbot Rice, and the emphasis was, they said, on appreciating ‘the richness of the material, the finish of its craftsmanship, its profound artistic quality, its deep spiritual character, all virtually unequalled among the arts of the past’. The concise catalogue and the subsequent, more discursive book *The Art of Byzantium* (1959) by David Talbot Rice, which he says was directly inspired by the exhibition, placed great critical emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of Byzantine art. The chronological range chosen for the 1958 exhibition was much the same as for ‘Byzantium 330–1453’, with the exception that a number of icons produced after 1453 were included. Some works that appeared then make a reappearance here: the cover of the 1958 catalogue illustrated the coloured ivory with the coronation of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (sole rule 945–59) from the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow (cat. 68). The 1958 catalogue regretted, however, that many objects on the original wish list could not, for various reasons, come to London (nothing at all came from America). Conditions have changed in 2008, but equally some highly desirable objects proved too fragile to travel and others cannot be loaned for various reasons.

#### WHAT IS BYZANTIUM?

Readers of this book may wish again to appreciate the skill and virtuosity of the (mostly anonymous) artists of Byzantium. But the notion of ‘masterpieces’ is now much more problematic when looking at other cultures, and today we expect a more questioning interaction with art. Whereas fifty years ago the responsibility of the professional art historian was seen to lie in the authentication of the date and place of manufacture of each object, the aims of art history are now more ambitious. In 1958 for an object to be labelled ‘Byzantine’, a decision was based on whether it could be described as of high quality and if it might have been made in Constantinople or by an artist trained in Constantinople but perhaps working outside the capital city. Today there is no consensus at all on what Byzantine or Byzantium means; indeed, a recent analysis even speaks of Byzantium as a ‘myth’ or a ‘mirage’.<sup>1</sup> And Byzantine art is often treated less as a collection of masterpieces than as a wide range of objects, each with a function, often religious, in everyday life and activities. Byzantine art is seen as embedded in every aspect of society: it is ‘evidence’, therefore, in a debate about that society and its aspirations and assumptions.

#### AND THE ANSWER IS ...

The challenge is to find Byzantium through its art. This is not easy. How far can we understand early England on the evidence of Stonehenge, for example? Or the

Roman Empire through walking around the Coliseum? The equivalent monument for Byzantium is the Church of St Sophia (fig. 8). A medieval response to entering that great church has come down to us: travellers from Kiev in 988 were so overwhelmed that they said they did not know if they were in heaven or on earth.<sup>2</sup> This tells us that scale, rich decoration, ceremonial and incense all combined to enhance a sacred building, but it does not tell us more than the shared values and sensitivities of the period, and its love of formality in public life. This was a society that had strong public beliefs but whose inner thoughts are veiled in its opaque literature and its understated art. Predominantly its literature was in Greek (which was the language of government but not of all the people, and which was more artificial and formally constructed than everyday speech) and, apart from the Bible and practical liturgical books, the literate audience (perhaps a mere tenth of the population) read lives of saints, sermons and histories, very little poetry and fewer novels. The viewers of its art were familiar with images whose content was visually restrained but symbolically rich. For example, there are many images of the Crucifixion in Byzantine art, since the death and resurrection of Christ is the central tenet of Christianity, but they express the theology rather than the physical sufferings of Christ or the emotions of the spectators (cat. 244 is a rare case of a Crucifixion so

Fig. 8  
St Sophia,  
Constantinople,  
mother-church  
of Byzantium





emotional that it is only explicable to us as the work of a Byzantine artist responding to a Western patron's instructions). The extreme realism of Grünewald's sixteenth-century Isenheim altarpiece is unthinkable at any time in Byzantium. Yet the inner spirituality of Byzantine and Western Christians cannot have differed in intensity. Although Byzantium lasted for over 1,000 years, its icons and circumstances are often supposed to have remained static and unchanging. As we turn the pages of this book, we can question these interpretations and ask how change can be tracked in Byzantium.

Constantine the Great (306–37) founded the city in his name, and so Byzantium evokes the Roman Empire and his conversion to Christianity. His traditional image as a Roman emperor (cat.5) is intended to mark where power lay in a centralised state, whose world mission was to be defined by its Christian faith. Constantine was the leader of a community based not on ethnicity but on a shared Orthodox culture. The art of the Early Christian centuries shown here does illuminate exactly this past legacy and future programme. The Jonah sculptures (cats 1, 2) and the Good Shepherd (cat.3) are in the direct traditions of Hellenistic art and are just some of many works that emphasise the Greco-Roman continuities of Byzantine art. Old artistic forms are used to clothe Jewish and Christian stories that broadcast the new promise of salvation and Paradise for the convert. Byzantine art employed traditional ideas, yet the new religious art avoided other familiar forms: the idea of a venerated cult image, as in the pagan temple, was rejected, and several centuries were to pass before the now-familiar image of the bearded Christ was formulated.<sup>3</sup> In 1958 the origins of Byzantine art were often sought in the East, with Byzantium seen as antipathetic to Classical art. Today more emphasis is laid on the Greco-Roman sources of Christian art in the Mediterranean lands, but this still means that several different regional traditions converged in the Middle Ages. The influence of Egypt as much as Italy can be seen in the materials. But this does not mean that all Byzantine art was homogeneous, or that Constantinople was the only producer of this Byzantine art. A number of works included here were produced in other regions of the Orthodox world, and respond to several traditions: the ampullae which contained sacred oil from the Holy Land (cats 26, 27) were brought to Monza around 600 and were seen by Westerners as precious relics from the East. They are part of Byzantine art, but their history is worked out far outside Constantinople. The silver paten from the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (cat.286) has similar imagery to the ampullae, but its origin is even further from Constantinople, probably from the Nestorian church in the East. Such works as these show that Byzantine art served a community much wider than the city of Constantinople.

A look at these early works sets in front of us a self-consciously 'modern' society that recognises its roots; pagan forms combined with Jewish sacred writings have been reinterpreted in a developing Christian art which supports the new ethical and political values, and which defines the structures of power, both human and divine. The prevalence of images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Child and the saints, and

of the Gospel events operate on many levels: for example, they define the best models for humans to imitate in their lives, they reiterate the truth of Christian doctrine and they act as reminders of the importance of the family unit within society. But they are much more than didactic objects. They can give solace in time of trouble and they act as a focus for prayer for good health and a prosperous family. The word 'icon' is so obviously appropriate for works of art that are not only pictures, but also representations of the ideal life and adjuncts of prayer and worship.

The progressive early Byzantine development of art was challenged by the iconoclast emperors of the eighth and ninth centuries, who banned the production and display of images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints. This period of reformation of art has intrigued historians, who have offered many differing explanations and motivations, from puritanism to a power struggle between the emperor and the expanding hierarchies of Church and monastery. The failure of iconoclasm or, as it was called, the 'Triumph of Orthodoxy' (as in cat.57) resulted in figurative art becoming the essential identifying feature of Byzantium from the ninth century. The art of the ninth and tenth centuries, produced during the successful military expansion of the empire under the Macedonian dynasty, and specifically under the scholar-emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (cat.68), offers us new interests in art. To this period belongs the development of Byzantine enamel production and the expansion of production of works in ivory and other materials. The court in Byzantium was at the centre of such luxury arts. Some works emphasise the Classical interests of the literate élites who continued to read the works of Greek Antiquity, and were consumers of newly produced manuscripts of famous authors, now written in minuscule instead of the majuscule script which had been the norm until the ninth century. The majuscule script was still used in an illustrated ninth-century manuscript of the *Sacra Parallela* of John of Damascus, an anthology of quotations from the Bible and Patristic texts intended to provide moral and ascetic inspiration, including over 1,000 thumbnail sketches, among them one of an icon-painter copying an icon to illustrate a fourth-century text by St Basil: 'As the painters when they paint icons from icons, looking closely at the model, are eager to transfer the character of the icon to their own masterpiece, so must he who strives to perfect himself in all branches of virtue look to the lives of saints as if to living and moving images and make their virtue his own by imitation' (fig.7).<sup>4</sup> The text, in which a theologian gives his version of how Byzantine icons were produced, helps to document how art was understood to function in Byzantium.

Other works of the Middle Byzantine period emphasise the Greek pagan past (like the Veroli Casket [cat.66] or the gilt-glass cup from San Marco that mischievously combines obscure Classical imagery with fake Islamic writing [cat.81]). This period of Byzantine thinking was distinctively ambivalent in its uses of Antiquity. Writers like Michael Psellos in the eleventh century explored Platonic philosophical ideas to see if they might fit within a Christian framework.<sup>5</sup> Visually



the Veroli Casket shows that, with a good knowledge of pagan mythology, it was possible to produce sophisticated satire and humour which the equally knowledgeable viewer would appreciate. Particularly revealing about Byzantium and the past is the church at Skripou (see cat.183). Its patron, the protospatharios Leo, was a rich imperial official who owned the land around the church. From 873 to 874 he built the large church entirely by recycling columns and marbles from the nearby ancient city of Orchomenos (fig.9). He composed an original set of highly elegant verses in a proficient Classical style for inscription on the west wall, whereas the templon screen inside the church has animal and vegetal designs in utterly unclassical forms. The church stands on antique ruins, but it both celebrates and subverts the memory of Antiquity in its decoration. The fact is that Byzantium admired and imitated Antiquity, but it never simply reproduced it: Byzantine artistic aims and resources were very different from those of the ancient Greco-Roman world. Some historians have seen this as decline, and in some material ways life in Byzantium was less affluent than in Antiquity. But who can say that Pompeii was 'better' than Constantinople as a place to live?

Byzantium maintained an ambivalent dialogue with Antiquity throughout its entire existence, but it celebrated the fact that pagan Antiquity had been superseded by a Christian Roman Empire, and thus a superior culture had been created. It is therefore clear that life in Byzantium revolved around the religiosity

Fig. 9  
The exterior west wall of the Church of Panagia, Skripou, built from 873 to 874 with columns and marbles taken from the nearby ancient city of Orchomenos by its patron, the wealthy protospatharios Leo, who also composed the elegant, Classical-style wall inscriptions



of its new culture, and so did its art. Even in the home, in objects for special or everyday use, a mixture of Christian and secular references pervades. People wore pectoral crosses to ward off evil (cats 129, 199), and the passing of time was marked by Sunday worship, church festivals and holy days, and above all by the annual commemoration of Easter, which stimulated many of the works shown here, such as the double-sided icon from Kastoria (cat.246), which was carried in procession on Good Fridays. *Ex-voto* donations of art were made to churches, and the greatest beneficiaries of the patronage of the rich were the monasteries. The wealthy founder of a monastery (sometimes the emperor or an empress) could expect eventual burial within its precincts and perpetual commemorative prayers for remission of sins in the afterlife. Others could donate icons or icon covers or liturgical vessels so that their identity would be preserved after death.

Many works illustrated here are the outcomes of such donations and aspirations. From the modern perspective, we have the dilemma of how to interpret the great number of works of art (as we call them) of this kind. The re-run of Byzantine iconoclast thinking in the Reformation and the subsequent exclusion of images from many Protestant churches may have triggered criticism of the prevalence of Byzantine images as superstition or magic. But after iconoclasm the Orthodox church itself tried to disassociate connotations of magic from images in accepting that they did in some way partake of the supernatural so that the holy figures represented could receive the prayers and requests for intercession addressed to them.<sup>6</sup> The most powerful images of this kind were those of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria (cat.177). It was believed that the model for all these icons was an image of the Virgin and Child painted from the life by the Evangelist St Luke. His panel was believed to have survived in Constantinople and was venerated in the Hodegetria monastery until its destruction in 1453 (see cat.266 for a Russian version). The icon could be venerated in a special shrine in the monastery and was carried outside in a public procession every Tuesday. Over the centuries it was credited with many miraculous healings and benefits, and copies were equally believed to have miraculous powers.<sup>7</sup>

#### AFTER 1204

For centuries after its foundation Constantinople was regarded as the most fabulous city of the Middle Ages. This all changed after the sack in 1204 by the armies of the Fourth Crusade, and the establishment of the Latin kingdom of Constantinople, until its recapture in 1261 by the last Byzantine dynasty of emperors of the Palaiologan family who had been in exile at Nicaea. Constantinople lost many of its treasures: many went to San Marco in Venice, the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris and other places in western Europe (fig.10). The works taken to the West came from the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors; from the Hippodrome, including the famous four gilded-bronze horses which, like many other antique statues, had been collected for the emperors and brought to Constantinople for public display; and from the treasures of the churches of the city where relics of the saints were kept in gold and silver





Fig. 10  
The richly decorated  
façade of the Basilica  
of San Marco, Venice.  
Modern copies of  
the four antique  
gilded-bronze horses  
carried off from  
Constantinople can  
be seen above the  
central portal (the  
originals are preserved  
from the pigeons  
inside the building)

reliquaries. Yet the final centuries of Byzantium produced a multitude of new works, micromosaics and icons in particular.

But one senses that, in this final period, a continual watch was being kept on surrounding, rival cultures. Some of these societies accepted Orthodoxy, as in the Balkans and the Russian lands, but these too were a potential threat to Byzantium, for in emulating and reproducing its visual language (as in the Gospels of Ivan Alexander [cat. 287]), they were posturing as future successors to Constantinople; indeed, in due course Moscow was to be claimed as a third Rome. Equally it was impossible not to fear the ever-closer encroachment of the Ottoman Turks (whose art, too, partly appropriated Byzantine ideas and techniques), and, even though the emperors went to the West to ask for help against Islam, the proposed union of the churches of East and West declared at the Council of Florence in 1439, much

promoted by the future Cardinal Bessarion (cat. 253), was never accepted by the clergy and people of Constantinople. Formerly Byzantine territories lost to the Crusaders, like the islands of Cyprus and Crete, never returned to imperial control, but their mixed populations of Orthodox and Catholic sponsored a new form of the icon that combined traditional Byzantine forms with the greater naturalism of the Italian Renaissance. The most prolific of artists in Crete was Angelos Akotantos (cats 238, 239). His work brings out one of the most conspicuous changes in the history of the icon: the artist's readiness to sign his work. Up to the twelfth century, Byzantine icons are anonymous productions of undocumented artists, but from that century onwards artists began to sign their paintings.<sup>8</sup> Angelos is known from several signed works and from the evidence of his will of 1436, which records the paintings in his workshop and his wish that his materials be inherited by his (unborn) son.

This different world in which we can begin to identify artists and their interests coincides (by chance) with the end of Byzantium. The history of art is most familiar as a scientific discipline when art can be matched with its artists as known personalities.<sup>9</sup> The challenge of Byzantium is to read its art without the anecdotal help of the lives of its artists, and with texts which delight to tease rather than edify. When Photios in 864 wrote a homily to inaugurate a church, he praised the mosaic floor in these words: 'The pavement, which has been fashioned into the forms of animals and other shapes by means of variegated tesserae, exhibits the marvellous skill of the craftsmen, so that the famous Pheidias and Parrhasios and Praxiteles and Zeuxis are proved in truth to have been mere children in their art and makers of figments.'<sup>10</sup> If we stand in front of such a mosaic floor as that from Thebes (cat. 8), we might remember that a Byzantine like Photios would have used it as an opportunity to show off his learning. That tells us a lot about Byzantine intellectuals and their mindset, but less about how the artist, the patron and the Byzantine public thought about their art.





# I

## The Beginnings of Christian Art

THOMAS F. MATHEWS



THE BEGINNING OF BYZANTINE ART must be dated to the year 330 when Constantine inaugurated a new capital of the Roman Empire on the ancient city of Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople after himself.<sup>1</sup> This city, mistress of the medieval world until its fall in 1453, has been largely supplanted by modern Istanbul. The great porphyry column that carried the emperor's statue in the centre of Constantinople's unprecedented circular forum still stands, but the statue and the two-storey colonnade that surrounded it with a collection of antique sculptures are all missing. Grand colonnaded avenues crossed the city, punctuated by plazas with statues that proclaimed the dynasty which Constantine hoped to found, including his mother Helena in the Augustaeum and his four sons in the Philadelphieion. The figures of his sons, carved in porphyry, were carried off to Venice, where they stand at the entrance of the Doge's Palace, embracing one another and clutching their swords.

However, the most extensive surviving decorative elements in the new city are the mosaics of the *Termae Constantinianae*, actually erected by Constantine's son Constantius (337–61), which were removed to the Istanbul Archaeological Museum from their site beneath Istanbul's present town-hall (fig. 11).<sup>2</sup> Scenes of the hunt, the wealth of the earth and joyous Dionysiac imagery in rich frames testify to the copious inheritance of antique art by the artists of the new capital. But none of it is Christian. The population of the city, newly arrived immigrants from all over the empire, brought with them their old pre-Christian cults and culture, including a rich repertoire of Classical imagery that formed the first nucleus of Byzantine art.

The first beginnings of Christian art, however, antedate the founding of Constantinople. The

growth of Christianity was very gradual. In Egypt, the only province where one can trace the numbers, Christians made up less than 20 per cent of the population when the Church was first recognised in Constantine's decree of 313; by the middle of the fourth century this had risen to 50 per cent, and by the beginning of the following century risen again, to over 80 per cent.<sup>3</sup> One can imagine a parallel growth in other centres of the empire, faster or slower in different regions. The Roman administration at first regarded Christians as a troublesome offshoot of Judaism, which they suspected of atheism and conspiracy, and intermittently persecuted for disloyalty. Systematic persecution was instituted by Decius (249–51) and Valerian (253–60), who arrested the clergy and set up commissions requiring citizens to sacrifice to the traditional gods. But Gallienus (260–68) restored Christian properties and civil rights and a truce ensued for some 40 years, during which the Church experienced unparalleled growth. It is in the course of this 'Little Peace' that Christian art makes its first substantial appearance in the catacomb paintings of Rome which peak in these decades.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike the grand imperial commissions that accompanied the founding of Constantinople, this was a popular art that owed its existence to the patronage of a Christian middle class wealthy enough to afford the services of professional excavators who carved the elaborate network of galleries into the volcanic stone, and skilled painters who developed a repertoire of Christian imagery. Significantly, this development took place without discussion or debate, images being customary with burial in Late Antiquity. The catacombs belonged to the Church and the clergy were buried there with the laity, implying that there was general acceptance of images in both lay and ecclesiastical circles.<sup>5</sup>

'Christian art' is by definition religious in subject-matter and in purpose. It belongs therefore to the religious realm and its rise must be traced in the religious life of the Late Antique world. Despite the popular perception that Christianity overthrew the ancient cults, a sharp decline in the officially sponsored ancient religions had already occurred in the second and third centuries. The Jews lost their temple in the Sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70 and with it their ancient priesthood came to an abrupt end. The ancient priesthood of Egypt came to a similar if less abrupt end with the cessation of government funding. For thousands of years the pharaohs had recorded their construction and dedication of temples, and Roman emperors did the same in Egypt, but at a rapidly declining

rate, virtually ceasing with Antoninus Pius (138–61). By the mid-third century most temples had fallen into disuse and priests disappear from documents. The decline of temple worship, however, did not entail the abandonment of religion itself but its privatisation.<sup>6</sup> In Egypt this is traceable in a multiplicity of domestic shrines in the Fayum, where the traditional cults were carried out in more intimate circumstances. Altars for incense are found and vessels for purification rites and libations, while images of the traditional gods appear in wall paintings in niches or on smaller portable objects in terracotta or panel paintings that served as votive offerings. At the same time, prior to Constantine, Christian worship was also carried on in domestic chapels or house-churches, which,



Fig. 11  
Maenad, from  
Saraçhane, 337–61.  
Mosaic, 110 × 110 cm  
Ayasofya Museum,  
Istanbul, inv. no. 15



Fig. 12  
Good Shepherd table  
support, c.300.  
Marble, height 110 cm  
Byzantine and Christian  
Museum, Athens



judging from the Roman walled city of Dura Europos, c.250, were also decorated with images.

Christian theologians emphasised how they differed in belief and morality from their neighbours, whom they referred to as Gentiles or pagans, but in fact there were many areas of continuity in religious practice and observance. For example, seasonal festivals such as the celebration of the rising of the Nile in Egypt or the spring planting festival in Rome, called the Robigalia, were continued into Christian times on the very same dates. St Shenoute was invoked to make the Nile flood. Similarly, the practice of 'incubation', by which a sick person might spend

the night at a holy shrine in expectation of a cure, continued into Christian times. The shrine of Isis at Menouthis outside Alexandria was a favourite place for incubation and Christians continued the practice there, where eventually Cyril of Alexandria installed the relics of Saints Cyrus and John in 484. Many practices surrounding burial were also continuous. In the Greco-Roman world burial was commonly accompanied by invocation of the gods, who were regarded as controlling the next world, such as Dionysos, Heracles and Demeter. Dionysos, besides being the god of fertility, as celebrated by his worshippers, the mosaic satyrs and maenads in the baths of Constantinople, was also protector of the dead and guide of souls to a happier life. His popularity in Roman art continued into the earliest Christian funerary imagery, with vines and fruit, personifications of seasons, and putti harvesting and crushing grapes (cat. 9.1). Such imagery was regarded as equally appropriate in the mosaics of the grand mausoleum of Constantine's daughter in Rome or the painted catacomb tombs of more modest citizens. Heracles was also common in Roman mortuary iconography, for he slew the many-headed Cerberus that guarded the netherworld. His figure is frequently found carrying the offering table in tombs. Christians used the same offering tables, but, instead of Heracles, the supporting figure is the Good Shepherd (cat.3).

The introduction of the Good Shepherd marks the first step in a decisively Christian iconography. The figure is ubiquitous, appearing from Britain to Syria, from mural decoration to terracotta lamps. He is a figure with many values. Christ identified himself as the Good Shepherd who goes in search of the stray and lays down his life for his sheep (Luke XV, 3-7; John X, 16-18), and Psalm XXIII makes him into a kind of *psychopompus* like Dionysos or Heracles, guiding the soul through 'the valley

of the shadow of death'. At the same time he often retains traces of his pagan antecedents in the boyish face and curly hair that resemble closely the youthful Dionysos and in the fawn-skin cloak of his revelries, which he wears in the Athens example (fig.12). The Good Shepherd was soon surrounded in the catacombs of Rome as well as, somewhat later, in the tombs of Thessaloniki with an ever-expanding repertoire of subjects from the Old and New Testaments employed in staccato, emblematic fashion to evoke stories of deliverance. Jonah and the Whale, Susanna and the Elders (cat.9.2), and the miraculous cures of Christ are typical. The images carried an implied prayer for similar deliverance of the deceased.

The production of elegant marble sarcophagi in Rome is the most copious document of the development of Early Christian iconography. Nearly 1,000 examples survive, reaching a peak in the late fourth century. Made of expensive marble from Carrara or Greece, they cost hundreds of times the expense of simple interment, and were intended for clientele of the highest social standing, such as the example made in 359 for Junius Bassus, the prefect of the city. At first produced in pagan workshops with a mixed range of subjects both pagan and

Christian, they developed in the period after Constantine an exclusively biblical iconography, carved in Christian workshops. The careers of Abraham, Moses, Jonah and Daniel were especially popular and New Testament themes were less common. In the second half of the fourth century, however, scenes of Christ's miracles came to prevail (fig.13). Towards the end of the century more ambitious works were introduced in formal architectural framings, organised around converging compositions that covered the entire front of the sarcophagus, with twelve Apostles flanking Christ.

The Enthroned Christ with his Apostles in the mosaic of Santa Pudenziana, Rome, is the earliest analogous apse composition.<sup>7</sup> A work of the second decade of the fifth century, it is a landmark in the history of art (fig.14). The apse of a church provided the largest unified space available to an artist (8.8 metres across at Santa Pudenziana). To meet this challenge, a new medium was invented, namely mural mosaic. In Greco-Roman art, mosaic had been a medium of floor decoration. When liberated from the scuffing of feet, the mosaic could include a wider range of fragile materials: coloured glass cubes of saturated red and deep blue, iridescent fragments of mother-of-pearl,

Fig. 13  
Miracles of Christ  
flanking Susanna and  
the Elders on the  
'Trees Sarcophagus',  
c.360. Marble,  
60 x 140 cm  
Musée départemental Arles  
antique, Arles







Fig. 14  
Christ Enthroned  
among his Apostles,  
c. 415. Apse mosaic,  
Santa Pudenziana, Rome

gold and silver foil sandwiched in glass. This introduced a radically new aesthetic. Religiously too it was a very new kind of image, for it was a grand cultic icon, that is a non-narrative painting meant for direct veneration. By contrast, cemetery art was rarely seen; one visited the tombs only on the anniversaries of the deceased, and the images were intended to tell a story rather than to be objects of devotion. But placed at the end of the nave before the staring gaze of the faithful, the mosaic of Christ at Santa Pudenziana was offered for direct veneration, and Christ was given the full beard and long hair that had been used to distinguish Jupiter from the other gods.

The veneration of images sprang directly from the votive use of images in the Greco-Roman world; in the ancient world communication with divinity always involved images. The explanation for the practice is seen in the inscription that Christ holds in his book, which reads in Latin, 'The Lord who preserved unharmed the church of Pudenziana'. The title preserver, or *conservator*, was used in Roman dedicatory inscriptions thanking the gods, or sometimes the emperor, for their protection; the making of the Pudenziana mosaic image was therefore an offering in thanks for deliverance, very probably referring to the church's safety during the Sack of Rome by the Visigoths under

Alaric in 410.<sup>9</sup> This kind of practice, known as the votive offering of images, was commonplace in the Greco-Roman world and was responsible for a large part of the artistic production.<sup>9</sup> Whether one had received a civic honour, a victory in the games, or a cure, one wanted to express one's appreciation to the gods, and this was done most commonly by having an image made of the god to whom one was addressing thanks. A large portion of the artistic production of the ancient world sprang from such a motivation; the Acropolis in Athens, for example, was crowded with hundreds of votive statues. In Roman times wooden panel paintings, that is to say icons in the art historian's use of the term, came to be used in this context as well, as is documented frequently in Pompeian painting and in the survival of a large corpus of pre-Christian icons in Egypt (fig. 15). One must infer that the Christian use of icons was continuous with this ancient use, as the construction and compositions of Early Christian icons echo their pre-Christian antecedents. When Bishop Eusebios of Caesarea in Palestine describes seeing icons of Christ, Peter and Paul, they must have been common in private domestic use; but he felt that they should not be used in the new public church buildings that were appearing everywhere in the 320s and 330s. However, icons became very popular and within a century they decorated churches all over the Mediterranean.



Fig. 15  
Isis or Demeter,  
found in a grave,  
second century.  
Tempera over white  
ground on wood  
panel, 25 x 8 cm  
Ägyptisches Museum,  
Ständische Museen zu Berlin,  
inv. no. 1443





1 ←

*Jonah Cast Up*

Eastern Mediterranean,  
second half of the third century  
Marble, 41.3 × 36 × 18.5 cm

Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance  
Fund, 1965.218

2 ↓

*Jonah beneath the Gourd Tree*

Eastern Mediterranean,  
second half of the third century  
Marble, 32.3 × 46.3 × 18 cm

Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance  
Fund, 1965.219







3 ←  
Table support with figure  
of the Good Shepherd  
Asia Minor, 2<sup>nd</sup>, mid-fourth century  
Marble, 95 × 24 × 11.5 cm  
The Hebrew Ministry of Culture, Ministry of  
Religious Culture, Jerusalem, No. 2311

4 ↓  
Cameo with warrior  
horseman  
First half of the fourth century  
Carved, polished, multi-layered  
sardonyx, 15 × 19 × 2.5 cm  
National Museum, Belgium; 1067/IV



5 →  
Head of Constantine I,  
the Great  
323–39  
Cast bronze, gilded, height 36 cm  
National Museum, Belgium; 75/IX







6 ←

Fragment of a  
sarcophagus front  
with St Peter

Constantinople, last third  
of the fifth century  
Proconnesian marble,  
102 x 30 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung  
und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no.  
1934

7 →

Relief with besieged city

Egypt, fifth century  
Wood, 45 x 22 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung  
und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no.  
1934



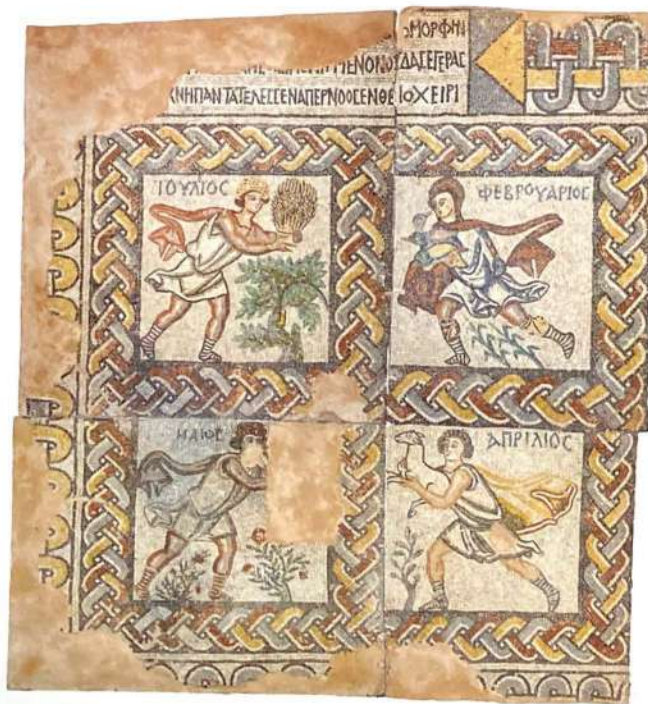


8 ↓

Part of a mosaic pavement with personifications of the months

Thebes, early sixth century  
Stone and marble, 340 × 66 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 29th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis



9.1 ↑ 9.2 →

Tomb with wall paintings, including *Susanna and the Elders*

Thessaloniki, early fifth century  
Tomb and detached fresco,  
202 × 144 × 107 cm, 170 × 127.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, BT 17A-B

10.1–3 →

Three chair ornaments personifying Rome, Constantinople and Alexandria

Rome, after 324  
Gilded silver, 18.7 × 7 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1866.1229.21, 1866.1229.22, 1869.1229.23

(The fourth chair ornament, personifying Antioch, illustrated second from left, is not exhibited)





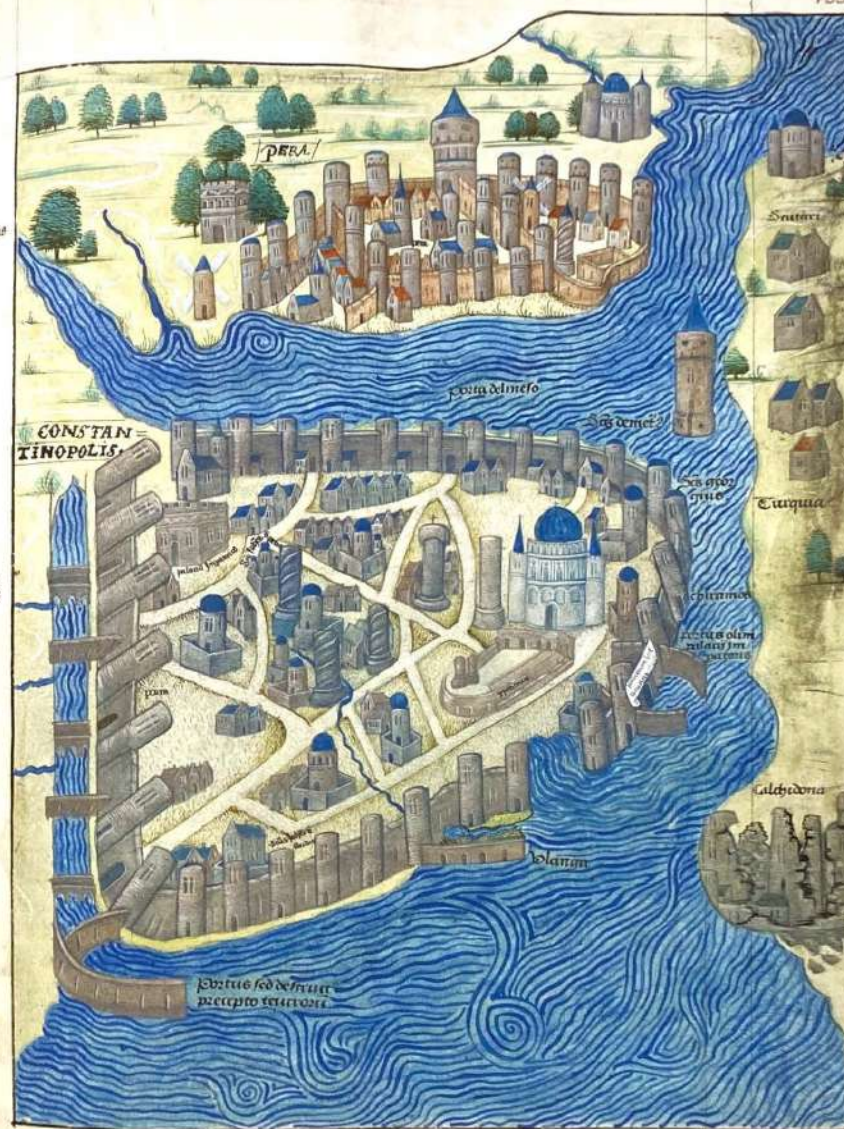




Pl<sup>o</sup> sciam lophia est  
ecclia cu muro magnifico  
et mirabili fenestraru  
adornata

In ecclesia sicut aplos  
quasi ad angelos eneo  
et instantius genu  
flexo columna est.

In hac civitate sunt  
pauci habitatores et  
numa latinorum.

[illegible]

CRISTOFORO  
BUONDELMONTI  
(c.1385-c.1430)

*Liber insularum archipelagi*  
(Book of the Islands of  
the Archipelago),  
folio 154v-155r

Ghent, 1482-85  
Ink and paint on parchment,  
36.5 x 25.5 cm

The British Library, London, Arundel 93





# 2

## From Constantine to Iconoclasm

HENRY MAGUIRE



THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE in the early fourth century led to a gradual replacement of paganism by Christianity in the official life of the Roman Empire. The emperor became cut off from the old pantheon of deities, and placed instead in a close relationship with the Christian god. Addressing the sixth-century emperor Justinian, the court poet Paul the Silentiary declared: 'We know Christ is the Lord, we know it completely ... Whence you have Him present as a colleague in your actions, whether you frame laws, whether you found cities, whether you build churches, or whether you set arms in motion, should that be necessary ... whence victory attaches to your labours, like a sign.'<sup>1</sup> The successful ruler was always partnered by Christ. In art, this association was expressed by a shared imagery derived from imperial rituals, as can be seen in the *adventus*, the venerable ceremony which welcomed the arrival of a dignitary, especially a triumphant emperor into a city.<sup>2</sup> A gold medallion from Constantinople (cat. 29) depicts an *adventus* of Justinian, who rides in full armour behind a personification of Victory holding a trophy. Beside the mounted emperor

Fig. 16  
Pilgrim's token,  
showing the Entry  
of Christ into  
Jerusalem, preceded  
by an angel, Eastern  
Mediterranean, sixth  
century. Earthenware,  
diameter 3.44 cm  
Royal Ontario Museum,  
Toronto, inv. 98B.011.00



shines a star, an old symbol of the advent of a ruler. According to Menander, the author of a third-century manual for orators composing aulic speeches, a rhetorician had to welcome an emperor as a star from on high.<sup>3</sup> Byzantine portrayals of the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem echoed the *adventus* of an emperor, in spite of the Gospel account of the event, which subverted the official ceremony by having Christ ride on an ass.<sup>4</sup> Even on a humble object, such as a sixth-century pilgrim's token (fig. 16), the triumph of Christ is resonant of imperial art. The image impressed into the clay depicts a winged angel leading Christ's mount, just as a winged Victory goes before Justinian's horse on the gold medallion.<sup>5</sup>

In Early Byzantine art, the emperor and Christ shared not only the same ceremonials, but also the settings in which the rituals took place. A good example of this phenomenon is a sixth-century ivory now in the British Museum, London, which depicts an angel framed by an arch and standing at the top of a flight of steps (cat. 21). Originally, this ivory formed the right half of a diptych, whose left panel is now missing. The position of the angel at the top of the stairs has a parallel in the carvings of the base beneath the obelisk set up by Emperor Theodosios I in the Hippodrome of Constantinople (fig. 17). Here two officials can be seen standing on the steps that lead up to the imperial box, which was called the *kathisma*. A set of instructions for the attendance of the emperor at the chariot races, later incorporated into the tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies* of the Byzantine court, helps to explain the role of these attendants.<sup>6</sup> According to the *Book of Ceremonies*, before the start of the races the emperor was to take his place on the throne in the *kathisma*. An official named the *praepositos* was to station himself at the top of the stairs leading to the box, so that he could call upon the patricians to mount the steps and make

obedience to the enthroned emperor. After the patricians had gone down the stairs again, the *praepositos* at the top of the steps was to give them another sign, so that they could go to their places on the benches and watch the races.<sup>7</sup>

Two other passages in the *Book of Ceremonies* describe the promotion of a courtier to the office of *magistros*. One set of directions explains how the emperor will make a sign to the *praepositos*, who will then approach him and tell him the name of the candidate to be promoted.<sup>8</sup> The second set of instructions stipulates that the *praepositos* will lead the candidate 'to the feet of the emperors', who will be enthroned at the top of a flight of porphyry steps.<sup>9</sup> We see, then, that the angel portrayed in the ivory assumes the role of a palace official whose job it is to guide a candidate up the steps and into the presence of the ruler, who is, in this case, Christ. An inscription carved above the angel makes his role more explicit. It may be translated: 'Receive the suppliant before you, despite his sinfulness.' Thus the angel, like the *praepositos* in the earthly palace, is announcing to Christ the suppliant who will climb the stairs to his promotion in the palace of heaven. In the case of the ivory, we will never know who that person was, but, as ivory diptychs were associated with the élite, he must have been a man of very high status, possibly the emperor himself. In all likelihood, the individual mentioned in the inscription was depicted on the missing left-hand wing of the diptych.

Just as the court of Christ was perceived as being similar to that of the emperor, and vice versa, so also the empress and the Virgin reflected each other in art. In the Byzantine palace, there was a court of women, consisting of the empress and the wives and widows of prominent officials, just as there was a court of men. Each court had its own set of ceremonies, the one parallel to the other. There was, for example, eventually an *adventus* ritual for the

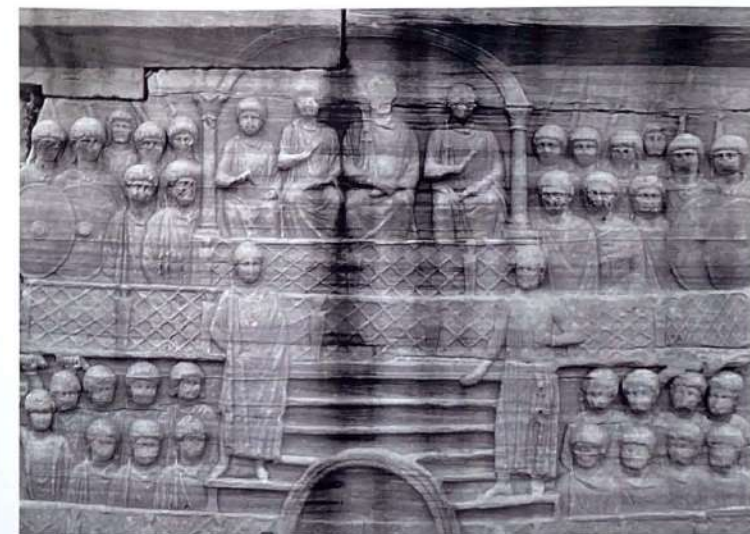


Fig. 17  
The base of  
the obelisk of  
Theodosios, Istanbul,  
showing standing  
officials on the steps of  
the imperial box, 390

arrival of an imperial fiancée at Constantinople, in which the women of the court went outside the city to welcome their future empress. When the empress appeared in state, she was surrounded by many of the same trappings of power as her husband.<sup>10</sup> An ivory relief of the sixth century (cat. 24) portrays a bejewelled empress enthroned beneath a domed canopy held up by four columns and screened by curtains. A similar canopy is described by the court poet Corippus in his account of the accession of Justin II (565–78) after the death of Justinian; it covered the throne of the emperor in the Great Consistory, a hall of the palace used for the reception of foreign embassies.<sup>11</sup> Thus the empress in the ivory is on display as the focal point of a reception in the palace, revealed to her visitors in all of her splendour by the parting of the curtains.

Another reception is portrayed on a sixth-century ivory now in the British Museum, which depicts the Adoration of the Magi (cat. 22). The



three Magi approach the Virgin and Child as foreign ambassadors. Their costumes, short mantles worn over long trousers and soft, pointed caps, are Persian. Their gestures derive from imperial ceremonial: each uses a fold of his mantle to drape his hands as he offers his tribute to the Virgin and Child. They are introduced to the enthroned pair by an angel holding a long staff with a jewel-studded cross at its tip. This angel replaces the *ostiarus*, a palace official attested from the sixth century, who, according to the *Book of Ceremonies*, introduced ambassadors at receptions.<sup>12</sup> Like the angel in the ivory, the *ostiarus* carried a staff adorned with precious stones.<sup>13</sup> Finally, we may note that the Virgin is not sitting in a simple house, but enthroned as an empress under an arched canopy carried on columns.

The Virgin reappears in a palatial setting on a later ivory which depicts the Annunciation (cat.23). In this carving, the Virgin has just risen from her throne, and is standing on its jewelled platform to receive Gabriel's message. Behind her is an elaborate building with a façade like that of a Classical temple, with ornate columns and capitals supporting a triangular pediment. This building probably represents the Virgin's house, which is here again portrayed as a palace. The location of the Annunciation outside the Virgin's house, and not, as the Gospel suggests, within it, proves the veracity of Christ's miraculous incarnation. The conception takes place out in the open view, not hidden in the inner quarters of the dwelling, where it might have been suspect.

In addition to portrayals of the emperor and empress, the Byzantines also made portraits of those holding office lower down the hierarchy, especially the consuls. During the fifth and early sixth centuries the consuls issued ivory diptychs to celebrate their accession to office. The last of these diptychs was commissioned by Basilios,

who was consul in 541 (cat.15 from Florence). The better-preserved leaf of his diptych is divided horizontally into two unequal parts. In the upper zone we see the consul, who holds in his right hand the white handkerchief, or *mappa*, which he will throw as a signal to start the games in the circus in honour of his accession. Below, the charioteers race around the posts that mark the ends of the course.

In some consular diptychs we find an additional third zone added to the top of the composition. For example, the diptych of Clementinus, issued in Constantinople in 513, shows the consul in the centre, dressed in his official robes and holding the *mappa* (cat.13). Beneath his feet two slaves in short tunics pour out the largesse distributed by the consul at the games – coins, pieces of silver plate and palm fronds for the victors. At the top two medallions containing busts of the reigning emperor and empress, Anastasios and Ariadne, complete the hierarchy. Later Byzantine portraits of the saints expressed the stratification of the heavenly court in a similar way.<sup>14</sup> A sixth- or seventh-century painted icon of Saints Sergios and Bacchos portrays the pair beneath a medallion containing the bust of Christ (cat.313). In their earthly lives, Sergios and Bacchos had been members of the palace guard, before their imperial master, Maximian, martyred them for their faith. The golden torques around their necks mark them as members of an élite unit. According to their legend, the two soldiers were stripped of their torques when they were deprived of their military rank. Now, in the court of heaven, they wear them again as servants of their true master, Christ.

In the works of art that we have been considering, dating from the sixth and seventh centuries, the earthly and the heavenly courts mirrored each other. Even if the one court was not an exact reflection of the other, they certainly

shared the same sense of order, with similar hierarchies, settings and ceremonials. With the advent of iconoclasm in the eighth century, the mirror was shattered. Ostensibly, from 730 until 843, with only one brief hiatus, the Byzantines were forbidden to venerate religious images. The reasons for this change of attitude were complex, but undoubtedly the sudden success of the Arabs had much to do with it. During the seventh century the Arabs steadily advanced at the expense of the Byzantine Empire, conquering Syria, Egypt and North Africa. They penetrated deep into Anatolia, and laid siege to Constantinople itself three times – the last occasion being during the reign of Leo III, the emperor responsible for introducing iconoclasm. The rise of the cult of icons in Byzantium had always caused some unease, as it appeared to contravene the Second Commandment against the worship of graven images.<sup>15</sup> Because the Arabs, following their Muslim faith, banned all representations of living creatures from their places of worship, their victories must have raised new concerns among the Byzantines about the role of images in their own lives and worship. Was God not punishing the Byzantines for their idolatry by favouring the Arabs?

In addition to the fear generated by Arab advances, Christian icons were overshadowed by another set of anxieties, which concerned the unorthodox use of images. A seventh-century bowl found on the island of Cyprus, which bears the image of an unidentified saint, illustrates some of these concerns (cat.45). As the man in the dish wears a torque, he may be Sergios or Bacchos. Originally there was probably another bowl with the companion saint, so that the two vessels formed a set. It is probable that the bowl was manufactured for domestic use.<sup>16</sup> A collection of miracles of the Egyptian saint Menas recounts how a citizen of Alexandria

ordered a silversmith to produce a plate engraved with the name of the saint, from which he subsequently took his meals. After he had eaten, his slave washed the plate in the water of a lake.<sup>17</sup> One may imagine that the bowl from Cyprus could have been put to similarly mundane uses, so that the purpose of the saint's image was not to receive veneration, but to provide a blessing for the owner's meals. By the seventh century other household items, such as jewellery and clothing, were also being decorated with depictions of saints. Here again, the role of these images, which were often anonymous, was not to be the focus of legitimate worship,

Fig. 18  
Folio 23v of the  
Khudov Psalter  
(cat.50), with the 815  
iconoclast council of  
awash with blood,  
ninth century.  
Tempera, cinnabar,  
golden painting  
and ink on vellum,  
19.5 x 15 cm  
The State Historical Museum,  
Moscow, ms. 129





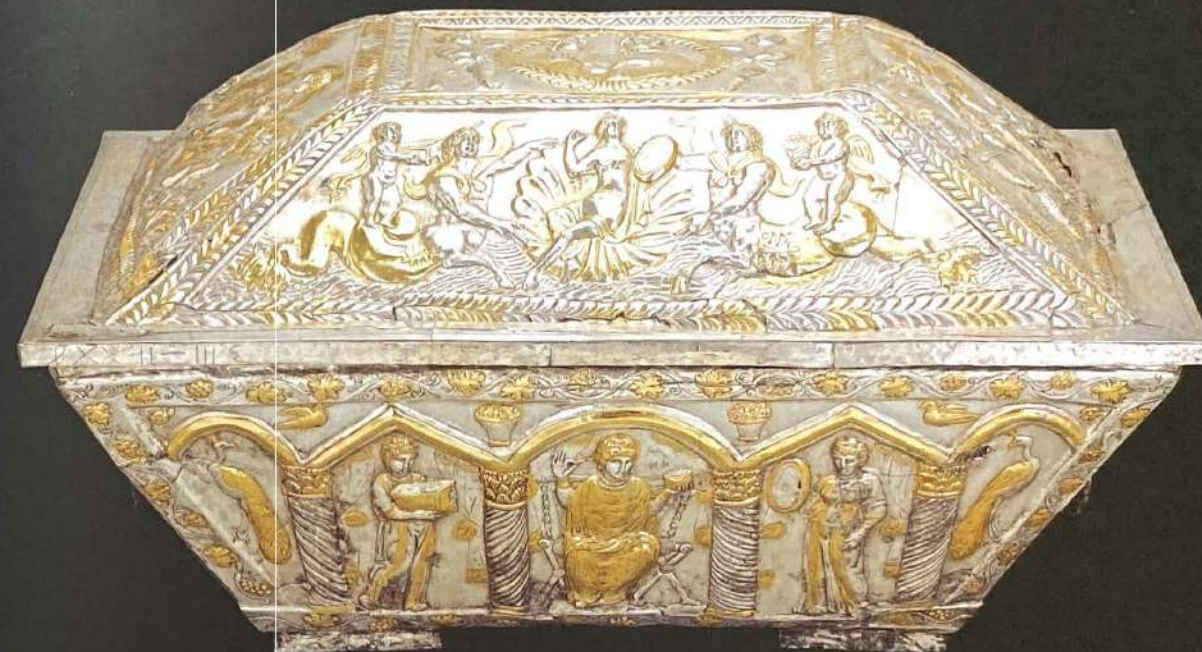
but rather to provide a kind of magical protection for the user.<sup>18</sup>

The dispute over icons raised violent passions. The supporters of images called Leo III 'the Saracen-minded' and engaged in an invective against iconoclasts and their perceived co-conspirators, Muslims and Jews.<sup>19</sup> The Khludov Psalter, a ninth-century manuscript produced in Constantinople during the aftermath of the iconoclastic dispute, vilifies the opponents of icons through its paintings (cat. 50). At the bottom of one page an iconoclast is seen raising a sponge on a long pole to whitewash a bust of Christ, which is enclosed in a circular medallion like the portrait of Christ on the icon of Saints Sergios and Bacchos. To the right of the same page the artist makes a comparison, juxtaposing the destroyer of Christ's icon with the soldier at the Crucifixion who uses a pole to press a vinegar-soaked sponge against the face of Christ.

Another page in the Khludov Psalter depicts the iconoclast council of 815, which, after a short

break, reinstated the ban on images (fig. 18).

The heretical council is a picture of disorder and disruption. At the centre is Emperor Leo V, flanked on the left by his co-conspirators, the iconoclast clergy. To the right, another group of clergy attack a circular icon of Christ with whitewash. In the right-hand margin, four streams of blood gush from the page and cascade to the floor, where the red fluid washes around the feet of the iconoclasts.<sup>20</sup> The four streams of blood are an inversion of the four rivers of Paradise, which Byzantine artists sometimes showed flowing from the base of the Cross. On this page the streams are symbols of death rather than of life. As in the case of the sixth- and seventh-century works of art that we examined earlier, the depictions of the iconoclasts in the Khludov Psalter mirror images associated with Christ, but now the reflection is reversed so that it becomes antithetical: the iconoclast emperor no longer imitates Christ as his colleague, but opposes him as his foe.



## 12

### The Projecta Casket, from the Esquiline treasure

Rome, between 330 and 380  
Silver embossed and partially gilt,  
28.6 × 55.9 × 43.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
M&LA 0166 1229 1





13 ←

Diptych with Clementinus

Constantinople, 513

Ivory, each leaf 37 × 12.5 cm

National Museum Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M 10006

14 →

Ivory diptych leaf with a *venatio*

Rome or northern Italy, early fifth century

Ivory, 29.4 × 12 × 0.6 cm

National Museum Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M 10002







15 ←  
Leaf of the consular  
diptych of Basilios  
Rome 27, 511  
Ivory: 31.5 × 13 cm

Segment from a consular diptych of Basilios  
Fotografico: Museo Nazionale del Bargello,  
Firenze, inv. no. 101

16 →  
Diptych with Asklepios  
and Hygieia  
Rome, c. 400–20  
Ivory, each leaf 31.4 × 13.9 × 0.6 cm  
National Museum Liverpool, World Liverpool  
Museum, M 10011







17

Plaque with Apollo  
and Daphne

Perhaps from Egypt, fifth or  
sixth century

Ivory, 12.2 x 8.8 cm

Scopaschena per il Ben-Archimone e  
Pavese per il Museo Nazionale di  
Ravenna, inv. no. 1000

18

Plaque with Nereid  
with fruit-filled basket

Egypt, possibly Alexandria,  
fifth century

Animal bone, 4.8 x 1.4 cm

Beside Museum, Athens, inv. no. 18747  
Gift of Loukas Benakis





19

# The Antioch Chalice

Byzantine, from Syria, possibly  
Kaper Koraon or Antioch,  
first half of the sixth century  
Silver cup set in footed silver-gilt  
shell, height 19.7 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
New York, The Cloister Collection, 1930 (19.7)



20

# Paten with the Communion of the Apostles

Constantinople or Syria, 565-78  
Silver repoussé with gilding  
and inscription in niello,  
diameter 35 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC,  
Byzantine Collection, BZ 1921.5







21

Ivory with Archangel

Constantinople, c. 525–550

Ivory, 12.8 × 14.3 × 0.9 cm

The Treasury of the British Museum, London  
P&A 0000000

22

Ivory with Adoration  
of the Magi

Eastern Mediterranean, first half  
of the sixth century

Ivory, 21.5 × 12.3 cm

The Treasury of the British Museum, London  
P&A 0000000



23

Ivory with the  
Annunciation

Eastern Mediterranean, late  
seventh or early eighth century

Ivory, 19.7 × 9.4 cm

Centre for the Study of New Approaches  
Constantinople, M&A, 100, 101, 102





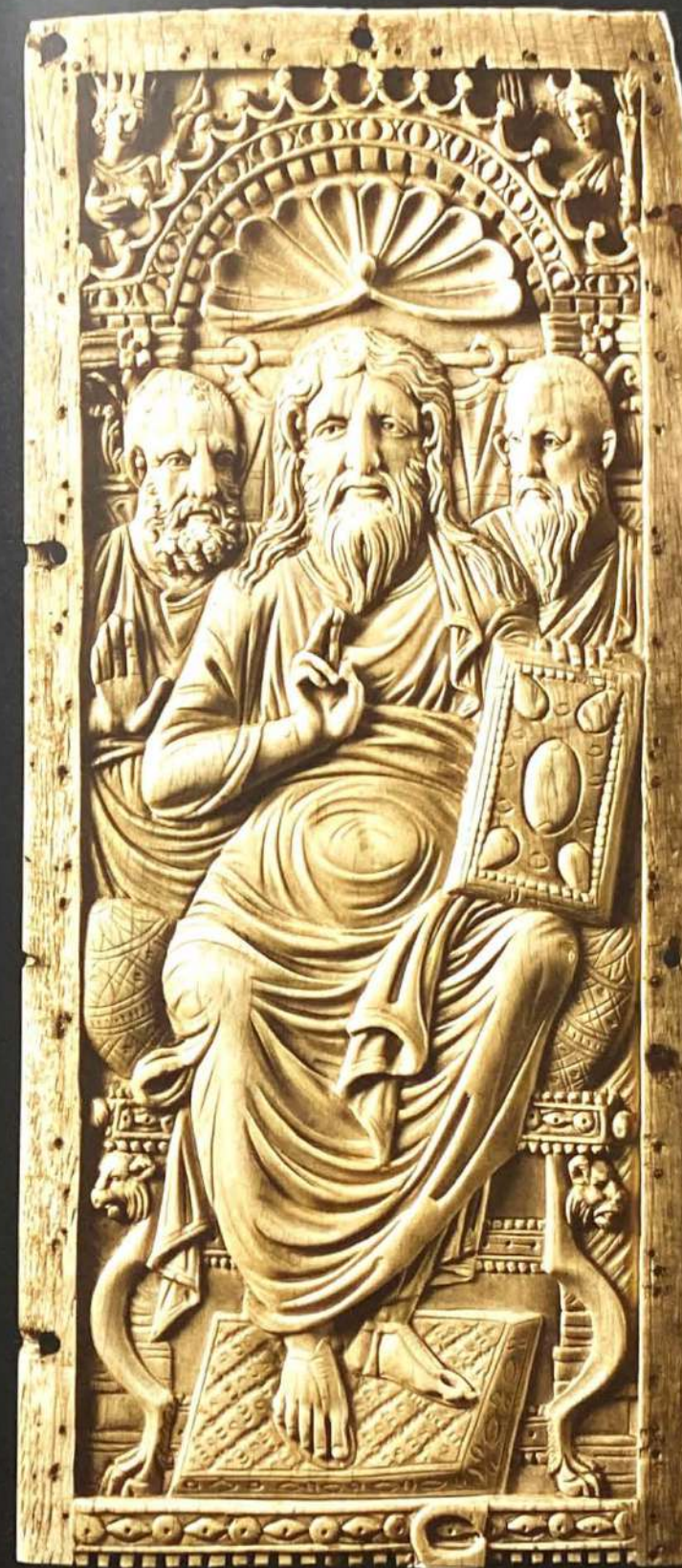


24 ←  
 Diptych leaf with a  
 Byzantine empress  
 Sixth century  
 Ivory, traces of gilding and paint  
 26.5 x 12.7 cm

*Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna,  
 Antikensammlung, N 29*

25 →  
 Ivory diptych  
 Constantinople, mid-sixth century  
 Ivory, each panel 29 x 13 cm

*Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung  
 und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. 584  
 and 585*







26 +

Ampulla with images  
of the Crucifixion,  
Resurrection and  
Ascension

Palestine, sixth century AD  
Pewter (lead and tin alloy),  
diameter 6.4 cm

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Monreale, ampulla  
10

27 ✦

Ampulla with images  
of the Adoration of the  
Magi and the Ascension

Palestine, sixth century AD  
Pewter (lead and tin alloy),  
diameter 7 cm

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Monreale, ampulla  
10



28 ➔

Gold pendant with the  
Adoration of the Magi  
and the Ascension

Eastern Mediterranean,  
around AD 600  
Gold, diameter (including  
suspension loop) 6.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
PL 1015.74.5



29 ➔

Copy from a cast of  
a now lost gold medallion  
of Justinian I (527–65)

Mint of Constantinople,  
534/5–538  
Electrotype, diameter 8.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
BMC P 125







30, 31, 32  
Silver plates with scenes  
from the life of David  
Constantinople, 613–629/30  
Silver, diameter 14 cm, 26.8 cm,  
14 cm

<sup>1</sup> Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of  
Antiquities, inv. nos J. 151–53







33 +

Silver plate with goatherd,  
two goats and a dog

Constantinople, c. 530 (?)  
Chased and incised silver, diameter  
21.8 cm; diameter of footring 9 cm  
State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg,  
inv. no. 49.277

34 +

Chalice with four  
Apostles and the Cross

Syria, c. 550–75  
Chased silver with traces of partial  
gilding, height 16.8; diameter of  
cup 14 cm; diameter of foot 9.5 cm  
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. 32.696

35 →

The Emesus Vase

Constantinople or Syria (?),  
end of the sixth century  
Silver, 45 × 27 cm

Musée de Louvre, Paris, Département de Grèce,  
Étrusque and Roman Antiquités, B. 1045





36

## Censer

Constantinople, 602–10  
Silver, diameter 10.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London.  
1862.0425.3



37

## Silver pyxis with Christ, the Virgin and Archangels

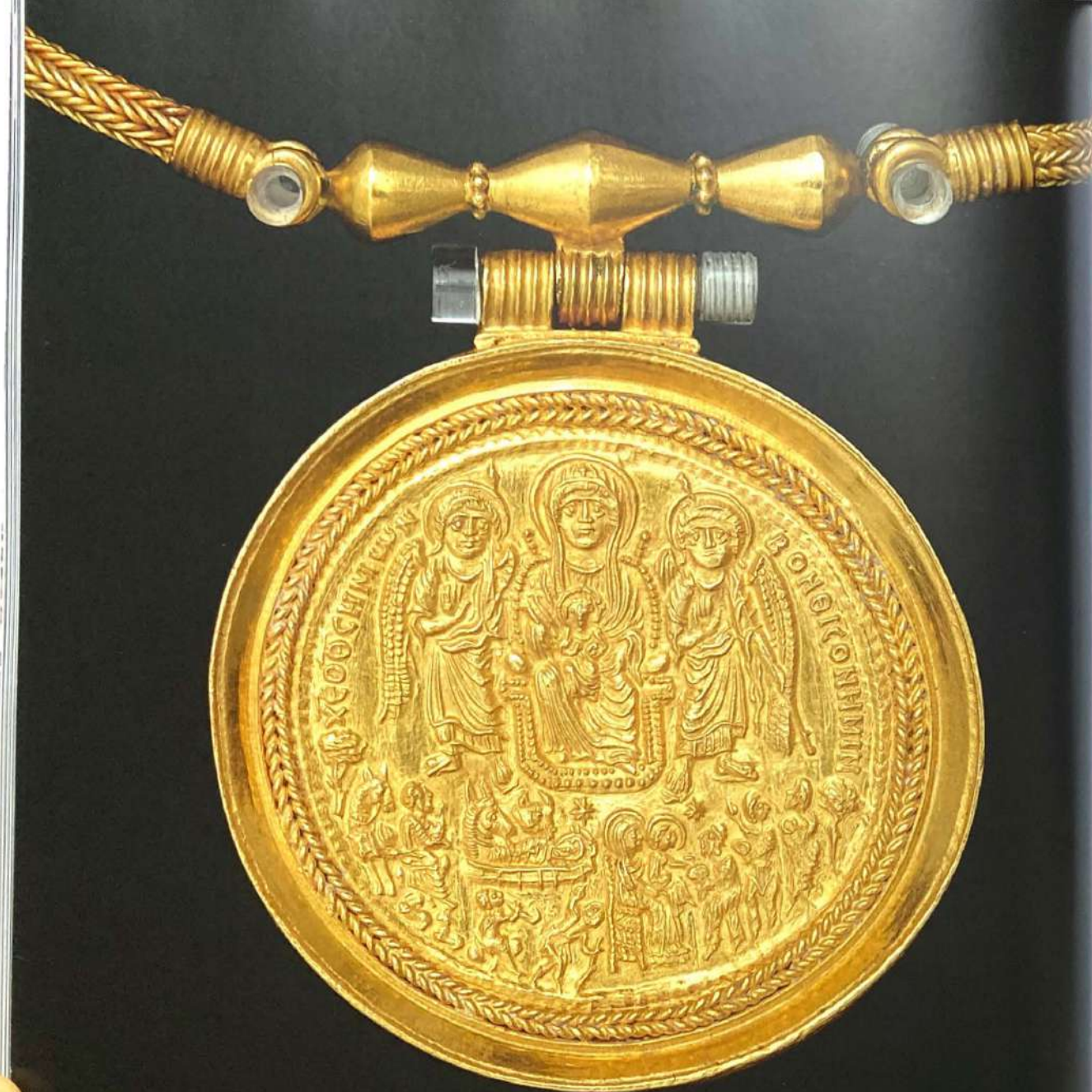
Eastern Mediterranean (Syria),  
Early Byzantine period, sixth–  
seventh century

Silver with gilding, 7 × 9 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of George D.  
and Margaret B. Foster in honor of John F.  
DeCrombrughe. J. F. DeCrombrughe of Classical Art, 1996.  
1996.0404.001







38.1, 38.2 ← +  
Medallion with the  
Virgin and Child, the  
Nativity, the Adoration  
and the Baptism and a  
braided chain

Constantinople, late sixth century  
Gold, diameter of medallion 7.2  
cm; diameter of chain 32.5 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC; Byzantine  
Collection, BZ 0035 to 352

39 →  
Amulet

Sixth or seventh century  
Gold, diameter 1.95 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, inv. 855



40 →

A pair of gold earrings

Constantinople (?),  
sixth or seventh century  
Gold, length 7.5 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of  
Antiquities, inv. no. J. 128



41 →

Chain ornament  
and coin

Constantinople (?),  
sixth-seventh century  
Gold, length 29 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of  
Antiquities, inv. no. J. 130







42 ↑

Silver plate with cross  
Constantinople, 613–629/30  
Silver, diameter 36.8 cm

Expiris Museum, Nicosia, Department of  
Antiquities, inv. no. J 437

43 ↓

Silver plate with  
cruciform monogram  
Constantinople, 602–10  
Silver, diameter 44.2 cm

Expiris Museum, Nicosia, Department of  
Antiquities, inv. no. J 435



44 ↑

Silver plate with cross  
Constantinople, 578–82  
Silver with niello inlay,  
diameter 26.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
0699.0425.1

45 →

Bowl with portrait  
of a saint

Tarsus (?), 641–51  
Silver, niello inlay,  
diameter 24.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
0699.0425.4







46  
Mummy panel with  
the portrait of a woman  
Florence, 33–70  
Encaustic on thin panel of  
lindenwood, 19.3 x 22.9 x 0.6  
The J. Paul Getty Center, Los Angeles  
JPG 2015



47  
Icon with Virgin  
and Child  
Rome or Constantinople,  
around 610  
Paint on elm, 100 x 47.5 cm  
Basilica di Santa Maria ad Martyris, Rome



48

Silk with the  
Annunciation

Syria or Palestine,  
c. 800  
Serge silk in five colours,  
33.6 x 68.7 cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, inv. no. 64391



49

Gospel according to  
St Matthew, folio 102

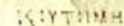
Syria or Palestine,  
second half of sixth century  
Manuscript on parchment,  
30 x 25 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, suppl. G,  
1216





+ **Ο** ρηιδας κοινω τω σεδωκιστην εν ψυχη αυτου  
και ταλαιπωριαν· και υπεμεγαλα αυ  
λυπου μενον και ου χυπηρζε· και  
παρακαλων τας και ου χευρον·  
+ **Κ** αι ελθοντες το κρωμα του χολου·  
και εστην διταρμου επι της αμφοδος·  
+ **Γ**ερνηθη τω τραπεζαι αυτη μερωπι  
ορμου τα εις πηλιδω και εσφαιτα πω  
δοσιν και εσφαιτα λελην·  
+ **Σ**κοτιοθη τω σφαιρα ο φθαλμος αυτου  
του μηδε περ· και ταρμας του αι  
τωι δατα του σφαιρα·  
+ **Ε**κχεομεν αυτωι την αρτην σου· και  
ο θυμος της οργης σου καταδ  
τωι οσφαιρα·  
+ **Γ**ερνηθη τω ηενταυ δις αυτωι αρτην  
μενη· και ερταυ και ηενταυ αυ  
τωι μηδε τω οκδοι και·  
+ **Ο**τι ου ενεπαζας αυτωι και οκδοι και  
και ερταυ και ηενταυ αυτωι



2. ANTER  
 3. VAW  
 4. KAGH  
 5. TNER  
 6. TNER  
 7. SWER

61140

1107A2

231



11A

100

10



14

22

54

1



10

10

Psalter with Christ  
praying and with the  
Crucifixion and an  
iconoclast, folio 67r

The State Historical Museum, Moscow,  
GIM 80993 Khud. 129-1

The State Historical Museum, Moscow,  
GIM 80993 Khud. 129-1

Psalter with Crucifixion,  
iconoclasts and simoniac  
priests, folio 87v-88r

Parchment, 24.8 × 25.5 cm

The British Library, London, Add. 19

[illegible]



52

The Fieschi-Morgan  
staurotheke

Constantinople (?), early ninth  
century  
Cloisonné enamel, silver, silver-gilt,  
gold, niello, 10.3 × 7.1 cm

Given by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New  
York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917  
(17.191.114a, b)



53

Pectoral reliquary cross

Probably Constantinople, second  
half of ninth or tenth century  
Gold, niello, wood,  
total height 7.2 cm;  
outermost cross 4.2 × 3.2 cm;  
internal cross 4 × 3 cm;  
innermost cross (the relic)  
3.7 × 2.7 cm

National Archaeological Institute and Museum,  
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, inv. no.  
6182





The Beresford  
Hope Cross

Byzantium, second half  
of the ninth century  
Gold cloisonné enamel mounted  
on silver gilt, 8.7 × 5.8 × 1.8 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 205.0006







55.1-29  
Group of Byzantine coins  
See pages 39-4 for details;  
illustrated opposite are  
cats 55.11 (obverse), 55.12 (reverse)  
The British Library, London; The Henry R. Hall Collection





[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

Constantinople (?), second half of  
the fourteenth century  
Egg tempera on wood, 39 x 31 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, are  
regarded as







# 3

At Court

ANTHONY CUTLER



ABOUT THE YEAR 1075 a mysterious individual named Kekaumenos, who seems to have been a highly placed military governor, counselled his peers:

If someone revolts and proclaims himself emperor, do not support his scheme but stand aloof from him ... Preserve fealty to the emperor in Constantinople and you won't fail in your expectations ... I beseech you ... to side with the emperor and to keep serving him, since the emperor who has his court in Constantinople must always win.<sup>1</sup>

More than a moralising plea for loyalty, this piece of advice implies that the reader might take the opposite course and move against the emperor – a possibility frequently realised in the long history of Byzantine conspiracy and usurpation. Both fealty and expectations characterise the nature of those objects that we have, works of art that in one way or another may be associated with the Byzantine court as things emanating from, or presented in, this milieu. As against the long-lost physical environment and decoration of the Great Palace, these things still speak of the pretensions and ambitions of those who made use of them.

The offering and reception of gifts (and titles), and broad suspicion as to the motives underlying such gestures, play a sizeable part

in the counsels of Kekaumenos. Both strategies also figure in the mid-tenth-century works known as the *Book of Ceremonies* and *On the Administration of the Empire*, compilations attributed to Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59).

In these texts it is obvious what is offered and what is received, but in many cases where we have only an object unaccompanied by such specifications, it is difficult to know whether it was a present from or to the emperor. If it is clear that the so-called David Casket in the Palazzo Venezia in Rome (fig.19) was given to the sovereign (and his spouse) – the inscription on the lid, above an image of Christ blessing them and the donors saluting this event, speaks of the 'couple of servants [who] adore as they should, the imperial couple' – it is far from certain whether a dismembered object like the leaf showing Constantine the Great<sup>2</sup> and probably alluding to his tenth-century successor denotes his demonstration of piety before the lost central member of a triptych presented by him or a gift to him celebrating this attitude.

Such problems are inherent in many instances of this sort and telling in the ambiguity they present since they attest to values ideally shared by the ruler and his court. In other words, it is less important whether a piece originated at the emperor's or an aristocrat's behest than that both parties to the artistic transaction participated in a common ideology. Central to this body of thought was the ruler's well-being, for on this depended that of the empire over which he ruled. His longevity, divinely protected physical health and ability to defeat his enemies were seen as concomitants. These beliefs are linked on an ivory diptych, the two parts of which are now divided. On the leaf in Venice (cat.75), as on another in Dresden,<sup>3</sup> SS. John the Theologian and Paul are said in the epigram at the top to protect an emperor Constantine – almost certainly Constantine VII – from harm, while

on the partner of the Venice leaf, now in Vienna (cat.74), SS. Andrew and Peter are described as absolving him from his sins. It is interesting to compare Andrew's pacific, oratorical stance – all the figures are depicted in philosophers' garb – with the role assigned to him in the book *On the Administration of the Empire*, in which Constantine attributes a victory over the Slavs to the intervention of 'the invincible and unconquerable warrior and captain and marshal, the triumphant and victorious first-called apostle Andrew'. The difference is explained by the several roles that this multi-talented saint was called upon to play in the mid-tenth century.

A similar complementarity appears when the iconography and inscriptions on a triptych, again in the Palazzo Venezia, are considered (fig.20). On its left wing the legend declares that, with the help of the four martyrs depicted, the ruler (again, most likely Constantine VII) puts his enemies to flight – a sentiment repeated half a century later in a poem on the page facing the portrait of Basil II in his Psalter flanked by icons of military saints (fig.5), where the martyrs shown are described as his 'allies'. But the epigram on the triptych's central member relates Christ's instructions to Mary and John the Baptist, the intercessors for humankind, to release Constantine from all illness, even as He subjects all powers to his earthly representative.<sup>4</sup>

In the inscription on the left wing the emperor is credited with the carving of the martyrs, a familiar topos in which the sponsor of a work is understood to have been its maker. Constantine, indeed, is described in a contemporary text as an artist in his own right and as the 'corrector' of other craftsmen.<sup>5</sup> Yet, even if these skills are mythical, the object as a whole encapsulates the way in which Christian imagery was turned to the benefit of the emperor. This is so in the case of a chalice



Fig. 20  
Triptych with Deisis  
and saints, mid-tenth  
century. Ivory, 20.8  
× 7.6 cm (left wing);  
23.6 × 14.2 cm (central  
plaque); 20.9 × 6.9 cm  
(right wing)

Palazzo Venezia, Rome

in Venice<sup>6</sup> – possibly looted by the Latins from the Great Palace or the Church of St Sophia – on the foot of which divine aid is invoked for an emperor Romanos. And on the even more richly gem-studded cross-reliquary at Limburg an der Lahn,<sup>7</sup> sponsored by Basil the *proedros* (a high-ranking civilian dignity), an inscription on the frame asserts that, with the help of the Cross, Constantine (VII) and Romanos (I or II) crush the barbarians as Christ shattered the gates of Hell. Appropriations of this sort are rife on works from the ninth through the twelfth century and, particularly during Constantine's sole reign, occur on icons in a variety of materials. He masquerades as the first emperor of that name, crowned by Christ, in the pose used to depict the Prodomos (Forerunner) as he baptised Christ in the Jordan,<sup>8</sup> on a well-known ivory plaque in Moscow (cat.68); and in the guise of King Abgar receiving the Mandylion on a wood panel at Mount Sinai.<sup>9</sup> Repeatedly, as we shall see, he appears as David in the Paris Psalter (cat.60). But the exploitation of analogies to

Fig. 19  
The 'David Casket',  
end of ninth century.  
Ivory, 16.1 × 8.4  
× 10.3 cm

Palazzo Venezia, Rome





Fig. 21  
Triptych with  
Crucifixion and saints,  
mid-tenth century.  
Ivory, 20.8 × 7.6 cm  
(left wing); 23.6 × 14.2  
cm (central plaque);  
20.9 × 6.9 cm (right  
wing).

Cabinet des Médailles,  
Bibliothèque nationale de  
France, Paris



Fig. 22  
The sickbed of King  
Hezekiah, folio 446v  
of the Paris Psalter,  
mid-tenth century.  
Tempera and  
gold on parchment,  
20.3 × 18.1 cm.

Cabinet des Médailles,  
Bibliothèque nationale  
de France, Paris



Judeo-Christian Antiquity was limited neither to the person nor the time of Constantine VII. This ruler's marriage to Helena, daughter of his predecessor Romanos I (920–44), lent new impetus to the long-established image of Constantine the Great and his mother Helena, who were regarded as archetypal defenders of the faith. They stand together at the foot of the Cross on a magnificent ivory in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris (fig. 21), thus supplementing the traditional iconography of the Crucifixion represented by the Borradaile triptych (cat. 78). If size and excellence in carving are evidence of imperial sponsorship, then the triptych in Paris is just such a creation, most likely from the reign of Romanos II (959–63).<sup>10</sup>

Besides a repository of ancient ideas, the Palace was evidently a storehouse of ancient artefacts, both Christian and secular. These trophies were brought out in their original state, as were the silver 'Iordanes' plate, the 'Likinios' and other minsuria of the fourth to sixth centuries.<sup>11</sup> Near the sickbed of King Hezekiah in the mid-tenth-century Paris Psalter (fig. 22) stands a *chernobokheston* (washing set) with a ewer of fifth- or sixth-century type. More often, early materials were incorporated into new creations, as in the case of the already-mentioned chalice of Romanos, the gadrooned bowl of which is a sardonix vessel of Late Antique, if not Classical, origin. New life was similarly given to the massive rock crystal known as the 'Grotto of the Virgin' which in Venice, if not earlier in Byzantium, was mounted on a base now understood to be a votive crown of Leo VI (886–912; cat. 064) and itself an artefact in which the emperor is presented as *isapostolos*, the equal of the Apostles and Evangelists who surround him.

Between the ninth and the eleventh century the re-employment of ancient hardstones seems to have inspired Byzantine craftsmen to exploit newly mined materials of this sort. Within this

(time-frame fall an agate paten in Paris,<sup>12</sup> into which was set a central roundel depicting the Last Supper – a scene especially appropriate to the vessel's Eucharistic function – and the much larger alabaster example in Venice (cat. 80), at the hub of which a half-length Christ who, in the inscription around him, 'Take, eat, this is my body', gives voice to the liturgical instruction repeated by Orthodox and other priests to this day. One or more of these sumptuous utensils might well have come from a church or chapel in the Great Palace or from St Sophia: the *Book of Ceremonies* (I, chapters 1, 9) describes how, at Pentecost and on other feasts, the emperor laid two chalices and two patens on the altar of the Great Church. The same text tells repeatedly (e.g. at I, Chapter 15) of crowns, chains, silver candelabra, pearl-studded and enamelled book covers and other objects brought in from the treasury and neighbouring churches to adorn the Magnaura and other parts of the palace when ambassadors from abroad were received.

To stress only unique objects in rare materials would be to distort the picture of gifts offered in the palace and to ignore the circumstances of their circulation. More habitual was the presentation of objects like the small silver crosses said in the *Ceremonies* book (I, chapters 19, 22) to have been bestowed by the emperor on a variety of dignitaries in the Church of the Mother of God of the Pharos on the feast of St Elijah and other occasions.

Such presents are probably exemplified by a small silver cross at Dumbarton Oaks (fig. 23). On the obverse, around the bust of Christ, appears the plea 'Lord help Romanos the Orthodox emperor', while, on the reverse, the Virgin's aid is invoked for 'Basil the Despot born in the purple'. These nielloed legends make clear that the rulers in question were Romanos II and Basil II, his son and co-emperor between 960 and 963. What the inscriptions do not tell us is

recorded in the *Ceremonies* book: these silver crosses were awarded during the same event as the prefect of the treasury and other officials offered to the emperor inlaid gold crosses. The precious-metal symbols were thus elements in a ritual of gift exchange, a sacred compact of allegiances that could stay the flux of loyalties implicit in the advice of Kekaumenos and all too often manifest in the political history of the era.

Readers of the *Book of Ceremonies* might well come away believing that without pomp there was no circumstance, no ritual context surrounding and affecting an object that may reasonably be assumed to have been associated with the palace. Yet in many instances it is difficult to identify surviving vestiges of Byzantine art with activities of the court, first because this text rarely enters into detail about the objects that it mentions; and, second, given its deliberate focus on 'public' events in this setting, because it ignores those things that pertain to relationships between imperial kinsmen and women, tokens exchanged as markers of family solidarity – the most important, and sometimes the most flagrantly withdrawn, sort of allegiance.

One example of such a 'personal' gift is a little-known cross-reliquary kept in the Church of St-Eloi at Eine in Flanders (fig. 24). Its cedar obverse, bare except for its gold and enamel tips, represented a particle of the True Cross; its reverse, sheathed in gold, bears an inscription describing this 'branch of Eden' as an offering to the Virgin of 'Maria, born in the purple'. This princess was a daughter of Alexios I Komnenos and Empress Irene Doukaina, who presented a very similar silver-gilt reliquary (now in Venice)<sup>13</sup> to the Kecharitomenē in Constantinople, the convent to which both mother and daughter retired after the emperor's death in 1118. Ostensibly devoid of political content, these richly decorated relics proclaimed the piety of their donors, even while the epithet 'purple-born'



Fig. 23  
Cross of the Emperors  
Romanos II and Basil  
II, 960–63. Silver,  
7.4 × 5.9 cm.

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington  
DC, Byzantine Collection



applied to Maria Komnene served to offset the fact that her father was a usurper. Clearly, Alexios I, noted for the distribution of particles of the 'Holy Wood' to foreigners and to monasteries overseas,<sup>14</sup> did not exclude members of his own clan.

The Paris Psalter (cat. 60), an exceptionally large and lavishly decorated version of the book that served the Byzantines as a moral and literary primer, may fittingly conclude these remarks on art at court. Quite possibly prepared at the order of Constantine VII for the edification of his son Romanos,<sup>15</sup> the body of the text is surrounded by an elaborate apparatus of patristic and other commentary. But it is the design and content of its fourteen full-page miniatures that best rehearse many of the themes outlined above. Even the ornament in their frames, notably the 'virtual' cabochons that stud the images attached to the Odes of Moses (fol.149v) and Isaiah (fol.435v), echo or anticipate the encrustation

of the precious-metal vessels and reliquaries that we have considered, while those of the opening David cycle (fols 1v-7v) reflect motifs used in mosaic decoration and enamel inlays of the period.

Best known for the personifications of Classical and Christian virtues celebrated in various Byzantine 'Mirrors of Princes' – figures like Ischys (power) in the scene of David's slaughter of the lion and bear, and Praotes (mildness) who attends his anointment by Samuel – the images refer no less directly to relics preserved in the palace, as in the case of the rod that Moses wields as he crosses the Red Sea, an object which was said to have been brought to Constantinople during the reign of Constantine the Great and which, together with the 'sceptres of the Romans' (manifest perhaps in the scene of David's coronation, fol.6v), according to the *Ceremonies* book (II, Chapter 15), was displayed to Arab emissaries visiting the court. Whether or not the final miniature of the ailing Hezekiah (fig.22), whose life is extended by God acting through the Prophet Isaiah, connotes the illness and absolution of Constantine VII, to which there seems to be an allusion in the epigrams on ivories (cats 74, 75), there is little doubt that a number of objects depicted in the psalter allude to proud possessions of the Great Palace. Today, there are many scholars who reject the picture of a society racked by conspiracy, usurpation and suspicion, attested by Kekaumenos and in the writings of Byzantine chroniclers of life at court. These doubters may well turn for comfort to contemporary works of art, a body of production from which such dysfunctional features are elided or combated with visual strategies darkly concealed within difficult, coded references.



58

### Icon of the Archangel Michael

Constantinople, twelfth century  
Silver gilt on wood, gold cloisonné  
enamel, precious stones,  
46.5 x 35 x 2.7 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Treasury, inv. no. 16

Fig. 24  
Cross-reliquary,  
beginning of twelfth  
century. Cedar, gold,  
niello and enamel,  
14.2 x 8 cm.  
Church of St-Eloi  
(Saint-Eloi), Euse







59 ←

Four Gospels, folio 190v  
Second quarter of the twelfth century, Constantinople  
Parchment, 18.6 × 13.7 cm,  
1-325 folios

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City,  
Cod. Urbini. Gr. 2

60 →

Psalter, folio 17v  
Constantinople, mid-tenth century  
Manuscript on parchment,  
37 × 26.5 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Cod. Be.  
Gr. 139



61 →

Lectionary with cruciform  
text, folio 195v-196r  
Constantinople, twelfth century  
Parchment, 38.5 × 29 cm

The British Library, London, Add. Ms. 39605



κουσθήσονται· μὴ οὐδ' ὁμοιω  
θῇτε αὐτοῖς· οἱ δὲ βρυχάροντες  
ὑμῶν· ὡς χρέα ἔχετε· πρὸ  
τοῦ ὑμᾶς αἰτῆσαι αὐτοὺς·  
οὕτως οὖν προσέχετε·  
μὴ ὡς περὶ ὑμῶν ὁ βρυχάων  
ραμοῖς· ἵνα σῇ τὸ ὄνομα

[illegible]

ζαυ. ὅς τοις αἰσιν αὐτοῦ ἀνέμῳ + κ' ἵπτο φῶς ἐκ κάματο·  
 ἰσχυρότερος + ὁρμάθῃτε τοῖς αἰσιν· τὸ παρὰ πρὸ  
 ματω αὐτῶν· ἀφῆσθ' καὶ μὴν· ὁ πῆρ' ἑμὸν οὐρανὸν  
 ἔμειπεν· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ αἰσθῇτε τοῖς  
 αἰσιν· τὸ παρὰ πρὸς ματω  
 αὐτῶν· οὐδ' ὁ πῆρ' ἑμὸν αἰ  
 σθῇ· τὸ παρὰ πρὸς ματω  
 ἑμὸν· ὅτι αἰσθῇ αὐτὴ  
 μὴ γινώσκει· ὅς πρὸς ἑμὸν  
 κριταῖς σκυθροποῖ + ἀφ' αἰ  
 ζουσι γὰρ· τὸ πρόσσω πρὸς

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



62 →

Painted and gilded  
glass bowl

Constantinople, tenth century  
Glass, dark violet in colour, gilded  
and painted, silver gilt and glass  
cabochons, height 17 cm; diameter  
17 cm; total breadth 33 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. B3

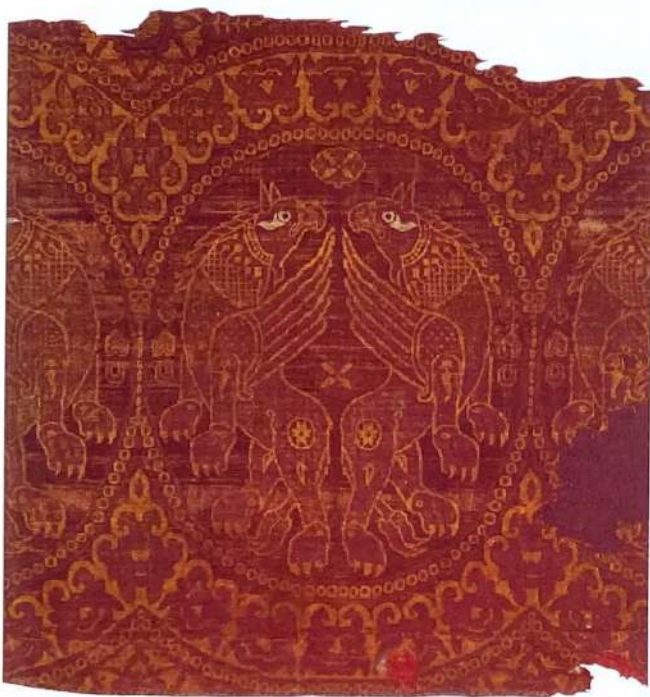


63 ↓

Fragment of the lower  
part of a dalmatic

Constantinople, eleventh century  
Figured samite 4 lats, twill weave  
2 lie 1; silk; white linen sewing  
thread, 51.3 × 107.5 cm

Musée d'histoire, Saint-Prospère du chapitre  
cathédrale de Saint



64 →

The Virgin's Grotto

Constantinople-Venice:  
temple, fourth-fifth century (?);  
diadem, ninth-tenth century;  
statuette, thirteenth century  
Rock crystal, silver gilt, gold  
cloisonné enamel, precious stones,  
pearls, total height 20 cm; diadem  
diameter 13 cm; height 3.5 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 99





65

## Casket

Byzantium, tenth–eleventh centuries, with later alterations  
Bone on a wooden core, with brass clasps, 16.1 × 24 × 15.6 cm

Peiré Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, O. Dat. 1273



66

## The Veroli Casket

Constantinople, mid-tenth century  
Ivory and bone on wood core, metal hardware, 11.2 × 40.5 × 16 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 216-1885



67

## Carved box with emperors riding and hunting

Tenth or eleventh century  
Carved and stained ivory, said to show traces of gilding, with silver (replacement?) lock, hinges and corner reinforcements, 13.4 × 26.4 × 13 cm

Fresco de la Catedral de Troyes







68

Ivory with Constantine  
VII Porphyrogenetos  
crowned by Christ

Constantinople, 945  
Ivory, 18.6 x 9.5 cm

Ston. Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow,  
inv. no. 1000

69

Comb

Constantinople,  
between 880 and 912  
Ivory, 10.4 x 10 x 2 cm

Städt. Museum zu Berlin  
Skulpturensammlung und Museum für  
Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 1000



70

Votive plaque with Christ  
blessing Emperor Otto II  
(967–83) and Empress  
Theophano (982–83)

Ivory, traces of red polychromy,  
18.5 x 10.6 cm

Musée de Cluses, Musée National du Moyen Âge,  
Paris, inv. no. Cl. 100







71 ←  
Icon with Virgin  
and Child

Second half of tenth century  
Ivory, 22.4 × 14.2 × 1.1 cm

*Paris, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de  
Paris, O. Dat. 1022*

72 →  
Ivory panel with the  
Theotokos Hodegetria

Constantinople, tenth century  
Ivory, 25.7 × 13.3 × 1.4 cm

*Museum Catharogerion, Cyprus, ABM 1.1  
71*







73

Ivory with Christ  
Pantokrator

Constantinople, c.950–1000  
Ivory, 33.5 × 11.8 cm

Lent by the Syndes of the Fitzwilliam  
Museum, Cambridge, M.13.1994



74

Ivory panel with  
SS. Andrew and Peter

Constantinople, mid-tenth  
century or 1060s  
Ivory, 24.6 × 13.5 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna,  
Kunstskammer B136



75

Ivory panel with St John  
the Theologian and  
St Paul

Constantinople, mid-tenth  
century or 1060s  
Ivory, 24.9 × 13.4 cm

Soprintendenza speciale per il Patrimonio Storico  
Artistico e Etnoantropologico e per il Polo  
Musale della Città di Venezia e per il Comuni  
della Gronda Laguna, Museo Archeologico  
Nazionale, Venice, inv. 19



Triptych with  
Deisis and Saints

Constantinople, c.1000  
Ivory with traces of gilt,  
25.2 × 33 × 2.9 cm (open)  
Vatican Museums, Vatican City,  
inv. no. 62441



The 'Harbaville' triptych  
with Deisis and saints

Constantinople, mid-tenth century  
Elephant ivory, with traces of  
gilding and red paint (not original),  
24 (max.) × 14.3 (the centre) and  
28 cm (open)

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets  
d'Art, OA 3247



78

Ivory triptych with  
Crucifixion and saints  
(The Borradaile Triptych)  
Constantinople, tenth century  
Ivory, 27.2 x 15.7 cm (central  
panel); 7.8 cm (left wing); 8.3 cm  
(right wing)

The Treasures of the British Museum, London,  
P&E 1973: 125, 1



79

Icon with the Koimesis  
Constantinople, second half  
of the tenth century  
Steatite, partially gilt,  
13 x 11.2 x 1.7 cm

Karlsruhe Museum, Vienna,  
Kunstammer, 8797







80

Alabaster paten  
with Christ

Constantinople, tenth–eleventh  
century  
Alabaster, silver-gilt, rock crystal,  
pearls, cloisonné enamel,  
32 × 32 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice;  
Inv. no. 333.92

81

Chalice of the Patriarchs

Constantinople, tenth or  
early eleventh century  
Sardonyx (cup); silver-gilt,  
gold cloisonné enamel, pearls,  
precious stones and rock crystal  
cabochions (mount), 27.3 × 18 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice; Inv. no. 333.93



82 →

Book covers

Byzantium, late tenth–  
early eleventh centuries  
Gilded silver on wood, with  
gold cloisonné enamels, pearls  
and precious stones, 29 × 21 cm

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice;  
MS Lat. Cl. 1.100









# 4

## At Home I *Ceramics of Everyday Life*

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI



IN THE BYZANTINE WORLD, as indeed until quite recently, in the daily life of rich and poor, laymen and clerics, in the city and in the countryside, pottery served basic needs, such as storing and transporting goods – primarily foodstuffs – lighting, and preparing and serving food. The pottery presented here belongs mainly to the category of tableware, and thus this brief introductory essay focuses on these vessels.

In form and technology, the clay table vessels of the Early Byzantine period<sup>1</sup> are the continuation and development of their Roman counterparts. The most popular shape is the shallow plate or bowl, generally of rather large dimensions, indicating use as common vessels for serving dry rather than liquid food.<sup>2</sup> Wine and water were drunk from small deep bowls, similar in shape to the ancient *skyphos*. Closed vases in the form of the wine jug (*oinochoe*) are also associated with drinking.

The form and the size of the domestic vessels provide valuable information about eating habits (fig. 25) and diet in Byzantium, while the way they were decorated, as most were, reveals much about artistic fashions, beliefs and prejudices at the time. Ceramic table vessels intended for household use could be decorated without the need to observe religious constraints and dictates. The decoration on the ceramic table vessels is a good example of secular art aimed at a broad spectrum of Byzantine society.<sup>3</sup>

The spread of Christianity is recorded overtly in the decoration of the clay domestic vessels of the Early Byzantine period. Christian symbols,

primarily crosses and Chi-Rho monograms or Christograms, as well as scenes from the Old and New Testaments, and figures of saints,<sup>4</sup> appear as decorative subjects that record the need of the faithful to invoke the presence and protection of the divine in their home.<sup>5</sup>

The shallow plate and the hemispherical bowl are the most common shapes for table vessels from the Middle Byzantine period, and again are generally of rather large dimensions. Size and form continue to indicate that these vessels were used as common vessels for serving food. However, vessels designed for use by individuals, such as beakers and cups, with and without handles, also exist.<sup>6</sup> New shapes indicate that these vessels had a special purpose. For example, *saltzaria* or *gararia* were vessels that had a heating device for keeping gravy and sauces warm at table. The renowned *garum* was a sauce whose main ingredient was fish blood (fig. 26).<sup>7</sup>

The practice of coating vessels with glaze was an important development in Byzantine tableware. The use of glaze spread gradually from the seventh century onwards<sup>8</sup> and by the twelfth, and especially the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was commonplace throughout the Byzantine world. In addition to its primary role of waterproofing the porous surface of the clay, glaze also influenced the way Byzantine table vessels looked, as it is shiny, brilliant and enhances the decoration.

With the widespread use of glaze it was possible to produce clay vessels that imitated metal, thus satisfying, in large part, the persistent demand among the emerging middle class for objects made of humble materials to resemble those made of precious ones. In this context, various kinds of decoration developed, such as paint, relief and engraving. One variant of painted decoration was *polychrome*,<sup>9</sup> which was executed in vitreous pigments, such as blue, green, yellow, white, red and black. Black is used

on the outlines. Polychrome decoration was applied to vases made of white clay, a practice associated with Constantinople (cat. 96).<sup>10</sup> The polychrome vases overtly imitate vessels made from precious materials with gem-studded rim and decoration in varicoloured enamels.<sup>11</sup>

A significant step in the development of Byzantine tableware was the use, in the late eleventh century, of a whitish slip under the glaze on vases made of red clay.<sup>12</sup> Establishment of this practice was a decisive factor in the development of *sgraffito* decoration, the par excellence decoration of Byzantine ceramics.<sup>13</sup> *Sgraffito* decoration, whose name is derived from the Italian verb *sgraffiare*, meaning to engrave, consists of engraving the slip in such a way as to reveal the red colour of the clay body of the vase. The incised red lines thus form the decorative subject. Byzantine artisans experimented with the whole gamut of *sgraffito* and played with the presence of colour. On the *fine-sgraffito* vases they executed lacy designs (cat. 85), as well as representations of animals (cats 84, 86, 92) and human figures. The similarities between these representations and those on metal vessels<sup>14</sup> are remarkable not only in the affinity of the subjects but also in the rendering of details, such as the dots and the imbrications in the field of the scenes. On the Corinth vase (cat. 87), an example of *Measles Ware*, the *fine-sgraffito* decoration is enlivened by dots of red slip, while on cat. 83 the finely engraved decoration is accompanied by painted motifs in green and purplish brown.

Vessels decorated with the *incised-sgraffito* technique feature not only birds (cat. 91) and other animals but also scenes with warriors,<sup>15</sup> who are identified as the *akrites*, the guardian-heroes of the Byzantine marchlands, as well as musicians and dancers.<sup>16</sup>

On the vases with *champlevé* decoration, the slip is excised from the ground of the representations so that the figures remain light

against the dark red clay, in a charming contrast between the light and dark surfaces (cats 88, 94, 95).

After the thirteenth century, the number of glazed vessels found in excavations increases, pointing to their use by a wider section of the population. They are mainly small shallow bowls, suitable for individual use and for a diet rich in liquid foods, such as broths and soups.<sup>17</sup> The *sgraffito* decoration of Late Byzantine vases is enlivened usually under an overlying orange transparent glaze (cat. 97) or is variegated with brush strokes of brownish yellow and green paint, prepared from oxides of iron and copper respectively (cats 93, 258).<sup>18</sup> Glazed vessels with slip-painted decoration are also among the finds dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (cat. 89).

It is noteworthy that the ceramic workshops, which were decentralised in this period, began to produce works on a wide range of themes.<sup>19</sup> The works they created had their own subjects and motifs, influenced by local events and conditions. This is particularly evident in the regions under Latin rule, such as Cyprus, whose decorative subjects on the glazed vessels – although they retained the transparent lead glazes and the *sgraffito* decoration of Byzantine ceramics – were influenced by the Crusader world of the East (cat. 257). Coats of arms, knights and noblewomen appear frequently on Cypriot glazed vases of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, giving their owners a sense of luxury and nobility.<sup>20</sup>



Fig. 26  
Saltzaria with lid,  
tenth century. Glazed  
ceramic, height 12 cm

258 Ephorate of Byzantine  
Antiquities, Chalkida,  
inv. no. 5410 a, b

Fig. 25  
This detail of a  
fourteenth-century  
wall painting from  
Mystras, Peribleptos,  
shows a dinner in  
progress



Fig. 27  
Plate, twelfth century.  
Silver and gold,  
diameter 27.5 cm;  
depth 4.7 cm

On display at the Benaki  
Museum, Athens







83  
Glazed large bowl with a  
representation of a bird  
Second half of the twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 10 cm;  
diameter 27 cm; diameter of the  
base 10.8 cm

Istanbul Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13336

84 →  
Plate with lion attacking  
a deer

Mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 4.6 cm;  
diameter 23.5 cm; diameter  
of base 13.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of  
Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. S.A.2/603



85 →

Large bowl

Mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 8.3 cm;  
diameter 24.5 cm; diameter of  
base 11.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of  
Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. S.A.2/603

86 →

Plate with lioness

Mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 2.4 cm;  
diameter 23.5 cm; diameter of  
base 14.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of  
Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. S.A.2/603



87 →

Plate with siren on a bird

Corinth, mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height approx.  
7.7 cm; diameter 20.6 cm;  
diameter of base 6.6 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth,  
inv. no. 13336



88 →

Plate with a deer and  
other animals

Corinth, Lakonia or Eastern  
Thessaly, 1180–1200  
Glazed ceramic, height 4 cm;  
diameter 22.9 cm; diameter  
of base 12.4 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth,  
inv. no. 13336





89 +  
Jug with trefoil mouth  
Asia, fourteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 22 cm;  
diameter of base 11 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 565 Ephorate  
of Byzantine Antiquities, Ioannina Byzantine  
Museum, Pargomena Archaeological Collection,  
inv. no. AK 150



90 ✦  
Fish-shaped perfume flask  
Egypt, fifth–sixth centuries  
Copper alloy, cast, engraved,  
14.8 × 8.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11528



91 →  
Bowl with bird  
Late twelfth–early thirteenth  
century  
Glazed ceramic, height 4.8 cm;  
diameter 14 cm; diameter of  
base 6.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 2302 Ephorate  
of Byzantine Antiquities, Prefecture of Boeotia,  
Thebes, inv. no. 101 ERA 1943



92 ✦  
Bowl with fish  
Mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 5.4 cm;  
diameter 11.5 cm; diameter  
of base 5.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 2302 Ephorate  
of Byzantine Antiquities, Prefecture of Boeotia,  
Thebes, inv. no. 101 ERA 1944

93 →  
Glazed bowl with a  
representation of a dancer  
Cyprus, Paphos area, first half  
of the thirteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 7.4 cm;  
diameter 15.3 cm; diameter of  
base 7.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13609





94

Plate with two lovers  
in a garden

Corinth or Lakonia or  
Eastern Thessaly, 1200–30  
Glazed ceramic, height  
4.5 cm; diameter 25.3 cm;  
diameter of base 11.1 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient  
Corinth, inv. no. C-19340054



95 →

Plate with animal

Late twelfth–early  
thirteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 5.6 cm;  
diameter 21 cm; diameter of  
base 9.1 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate  
of Byzantine Antiquities, Akropolis, Prefecture  
of Boiotia, inv. no. 4831-1331



96 ↓

Glazed small four-  
lobe bowl with a  
representation of a bird

Constantinople, eleventh century  
Glazed ceramic, height 8.7 cm;  
diameter 13 cm; diameter of  
base 5.7 cm

Benski Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13573

97 ↗

Glazed small bowl with  
a representation of a  
double-headed eagle

Late thirteenth or  
fourteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 7 cm;  
diameter 12 cm; diameter  
of base 4.8 cm

Benski Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13591





ACCISECAPITULUM  
  
07 ATTORIX

# 4

## At Home 2 *Metalwork of Everyday Life*

MARLIA MUNDELL MANGO



**H**OME LIFE IN BYZANTIUM MUST have differed greatly between the wealthy and the poor, both in the living space and in the decorative possessions and practical utensils. As usual in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, we know far more about the lifestyle of the rich than the indigent. Privileged households in Byzantium were furnished with vessels in silver and in ivory or bone, in addition to those in baser metals, glass and pottery. While the silver in the exhibition comes from five caches or treasures of silver plate ranging in date from the fourth to the eleventh or twelfth centuries, the two medieval ivory and bone caskets were preserved on their own. Each silver treasure, concealed in the past for safekeeping and never retrieved by its owner, is composed of different types of objects which vary by chance of selection and survival. The contents of the treasures suggest the range of domestic objects available in silver in the Byzantine period.

The earliest piece of silver in the exhibition is the Projecta Casket (cat. 12) from the Esquiline treasure of the fourth century, found in Rome. This treasure has a wide assortment of silver objects – two caskets, small plates and dishes, two wash basins, a flask, a ewer, two amphoras, spoons, chair ornaments (cat. 10.1–3), horse trappings – as well as a silver inlaid bronze ewer shaped as a female head, but it lacks larger serving plates of the type that appears in other treasures. Contemporary with the Projecta Casket is the ewer (cat. 114) that belongs to a collection of silver found outside the Roman Empire, at Traprain in Scotland. This find contains more than 100 pieces of *Hacksilber*, namely silver cut into pieces for its bullion value, and appears to comprise more than one set of looted domestic silver of the late fourth and early fifth centuries (five decorated flasks or ewers, large plates, at least 50 bowls and basins, goblets

and spoons). At the other end of the Late Antique period are the Cyprus and Mytilene treasures, from which eight plates (cats 30, 31, 32, 42, 43, 44, 105, 106), five spoons (cats 101, 102, 107, 108, 109) and the handled wash basin (cat. 104) are exhibited here. Both treasures contain objects with control stamps, dating them to the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>1</sup> According to these stamps, the Cyprus treasure (nine plates illustrating a cycle of David; six serving plates, bowl, censer, sets of spoons) was formed between 578 and 651, while the Mytilene treasure (four serving plates, two basins, ewer, lampstand, lamp, spoons) was perhaps acquired as a complete set some time between 610 and 630.

Complementing all this Late Antique silver are ten plates of the eleventh or twelfth centuries (fig. 29) that form part of a treasure of unknown provenance, which has recently come to light.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the numerous sets of domestic silver recovered from the earlier period, few comparable finds date to medieval Byzantium. But objects surviving from both periods suggest a continuous tradition of production and use. Medieval texts refer to secular silver services used in that period, from the imperial palace down.<sup>3</sup>

Viewed together, the extant silver reflects the diversity of a refined industry and the public demand that it served. Despite the elaborate decoration of some domestic pieces, some localised wear indicates that silver was not just for display but put to use.<sup>4</sup> The plates and spoons seen here (cats 42–44, 101, 102, 105–109) were *argentum escarium*, part of a dinner service. The medieval plates mentioned above belong to a set of ten, eight of which stack together, making them highly portable objects suited to a military campaign or journey.<sup>5</sup> The handled basin and the ewer (cats 104, 114) may have been used at table for hand washing or elsewhere in the household. Alternatively, the ewer may have formed part of *argentum potorium*, a drinking service. The

decoration of the silver casket (cat. 12) shows that it was carried to the bath together with other items, which include a *situla* (a bucket), a type known elsewhere in silver (fig. 28) and shown here in brass (cat. 98). The silver appearing here is supplemented by two ivory/bone caskets (cats 65, 66) from the Middle Byzantine period, whose specific use is unknown. These two casket types are characterised by flat and sloping lids respectively, the former continuing the general shape of the Projecta Casket.

Decorative themes can relate to function or reflect the taste or status of the owner. Personal monograms appear on silver plates and spoons (cats 43, 99). On all the objects – early and medieval – we see a mix of secular and decorative, mythological and Christian. Scenes relating to the hunt may be mythological or contemporary. Some argue that Classical themes reflect the owner's traditional (pagan) education (*paideia*).<sup>6</sup> Our interpretation of the owner's choice of decoration should ideally view each object within the broader context of its treasure. Aphrodite/Venus and mythical aquatic figures appear on both the Projecta Casket and the Mytilene basin, linking concepts of beauty, water and the bath. The front of the Projecta Casket juxtaposes portraits of Venus and the casket's owner, while its back shows the owner approaching a bath building. On the Mytilene basin, used for washing, Aphrodite stands above the head of Poseidon. On one of the three medieval plates discussed here, the personification of the Sea (Thalassa) adorns the centre. Rather than a reference to bathing, Thalassa may here allude to the titled owner's career (perhaps a naval one?); two matching plates within the treasure portray equestrian figures, one military, the other engaged in hunting (fig. 29), and these are possibly also personal references. It is interesting to note that the most developed mythological repertory seen here is late, being on the ivory Veroli Casket of

the tenth century (cat. 66), while the slightly later Duthuit Casket (cat. 65) illustrates Heracles among scenes of mythical animal combat. Likewise, animals appear on the earlier Cyprus treasure spoons of the seventh century (cats 101, 102). The spoons with panther and lion, seen here, belong to a set which would originally have numbered twelve, each bearing a different running animal (ram, griffin, hare, tiger, stag, bear, horse, boar, bull), all of which feature elsewhere in hunting or pastoral scenes popular in Late Antiquity, on other silver spoons (cats 99, 100) and plates such as that with the goatherd (cat. 33) and the brass bucket with hunting scenes (cat. 98).

The David plates (cats 30, 31, 32) represent the most developed use of Old Testament iconography on silver, to convey a message that is both Christian and political. The Christian images on the Traprain ewer (cat. 114) include the mix of Old and New Testament scenes characteristic of numerous gold glass bowls whose inscriptions allude to drinking, pointing perhaps to a drinking rather than a washing function for the ewer. The cross in the centre of the Cyprus and Mytilene plates (cats 42, 44, 105, 106) relates in its position and form to earlier central motifs on serving plates, particularly those with monograms which eventually become cruciform (cat. 43). Occasionally, mythological and Christian images are combined either on the same object, as on the Projecta Casket, where Venus appears not far from the Chi Rho of the dedicatory inscription; or within the same treasure, as on the plates (with cross) and wash basin (with Aphrodite) of the Mytilene treasure (cats 104, 105, 106) whose control stamps indicate that they were made and acquired together. Such a mix of traditions is characteristic of Late Antiquity.

Fig. 28  
*Situla* with  
mythological  
decoration, part  
of the Concesti  
treasure, fifth century.  
Silver, height 22.5 cm  
The State Hermitage Museum,  
St Petersburg, inv. no. 2160/2



Fig. 29  
Plate with mounted  
hunter, part of a set  
of silver that belonged to  
Constantine the Alan,  
*proedros*, eleventh or  
twelfth century. Silver,  
diameter 29 cm  
On display at the Benaki  
Museum, Athens







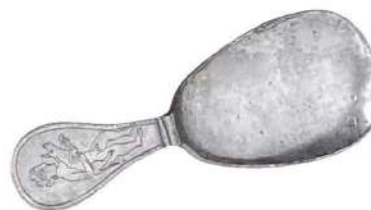
98 ←

# Bucket

Eastern Mediterranean,  
sixth century

Hammered, chased and punched  
brass, height, including handle:  
21 cm, diameter 17.8 cm

British Museum, Accession no. 1871.11.1



99 ←

# Spoon with inscription

Byzantium, early seventh century  
Beaten silver, turned (the handle)  
and nielloed (monogram and  
inscription), 24.9 × 3.9 cm; bowl  
diameter 1.9 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la  
Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2394

100 ←

# Spoon with flat handle

Byzantium, sixth century (?)  
Silver, 14.6 × 5.3 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la  
Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2399

101, 102 ←

# Two spoons decorated with a panther and a lion

Constantinople (?), seventh century  
Silver, length 25.8 cm (panther);  
length 25.7 cm (lion)

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
1899.0425.25, 1899.0425.08

103 →

# Sword

Constantinople or Thessaloniki,  
fourteenth or first half of the  
fifteenth century  
Steel, forging, engraving,  
length 111 cm

Museum of Applied Art,  
Belgrade, MAA inv. no. 1120





104 ↓

Bowl (*trulla*) with  
Aphrodite

Constantinople,  
610–25  
Silver, height 7.3 cm;  
diameter 16.5 cm;  
length with handle 31.3 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture,  
Byzantine and Christian Museum,  
Athens, inv. 899



105 ↓

Plate

Constantinople, 602–10  
Silver, diameter 15.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture,  
Byzantine and Christian Museum,  
Athens, inv. 893



106 →

Plate

Constantinople, 610–25  
Silver, diameter 25.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture,  
Byzantine and Christian Museum,  
Athens, inv. 896







107, 108, 109  
Three spoons  
Constantinople, 610–25  
Silver, length 22 cm;  
length 25.5 cm; length 24 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture,  
Byzantine and Christian Museum,  
Athens, IASM 901, IASM 902, IASM 903



110 ↑

#### Bracelet

Sixth–seventh centuries  
Gold, diameter 5.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, IASM 888



111 ↗

#### Buckle

Sixth–seventh centuries  
Gold, length 5.4 cm; width of  
buckle plate 1.8 cm; diameter of  
hoop 2.1 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, IASM 881



112 →

#### Seal

Constantinople, 610–25  
Bronze, base 5.7 × 5.7 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, IASM 909

113.1 ↗

#### Solids

Constantinople, 602–10  
Gold

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, IASM 910

113.2 →

#### Solids

Constantinople, 610–41  
Gold

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, IASM 911







114 ↗

Ewer with biblical scenes  
Rome (?), late fourth century  
Silver-gilt, 29.3 × 8.7 cm

*Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museum  
at Scotland, GVA*

115 ↘

Silver-gilt weight from the  
reign of Theodora

Constantinople, between 11 January  
1055 and 31 August 1056

Silver, gilt, niello, diameter 3.28  
cm; weight 32.96 g

*The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE  
0610.37.1*



116 →

One-pound commodity  
weight with two emperors

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century

Leaded brass, 6.9 × 6.2 cm;  
weight 323.76 g

*The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
PE 0013.12.011*



117 ↘

One-pound commodity  
weight with imperial  
figures

Eastern Mediterranean, late  
fourth–fifth century

Leaded brass, 5.6 × 5.8 cm;  
weight 318.11 g

*The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
PE 0013.12.013*



118 ↘

One-pound commodity  
weight with imperial  
figures

Eastern Mediterranean, late  
fourth–fifth century

Gunmetal, 6.7 × 6.4 cm;  
weight 323.71 g

*The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
PE 0010.56.1*







# 4

## At Home 3 Jewellery and Adornment

AIMILIA YEROULANOU



A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE character of Byzantine goldwork, as well as silverwork, is predicated on seeking the source of its inspiration and its roots in Hellenistic art. In such centres as Antioch and Alexandria, the Greek language, Greek education and Greek art were kept alive and cultivated assiduously, even after Roman domination, primarily in the higher echelons of society. Although the Roman conquerors imposed administrative reforms, introduced new manners and habits, and applied architectural and technical achievements, they continued to draw on Greek thought as the characteristics of Hellenistic tradition and art passed into the Early Christian period.

During the third century, certain particularities appeared in goldwork, in response to the demand for luxury during a period of severe economic crisis. The *opus interrasile* or pierced-work (*diatrata*) technique<sup>1</sup> is one technically and aesthetically special way of combining the necessary economy in the use of gold with the desired variety and vitality in the lacy surface of the jewellery. Early examples of this technique in the third century are mainly mounts for coins, either as necklace pendants or pectorals (*enkolpia*), which feature patterns with Greek motifs, such as palmettes, spirals and guilloches.<sup>2</sup> These types of medallions have been found over a very wide area, from France and England to the Eastern Mediterranean, revealing the existence of these elements in Roman goldwork.

The medallions of Constantine the Great (cat. 128), which are representative of the new trends in the art of this period, combine the heavy style of the late imperial effigies with the finely executed pierced-work surface of the mounts, eminently suited to the interplay of matter and light, as a substitute for the polychromy of Roman jewellery. Finds such

as the Hoxne treasure of Roman gold and silver coins, jewellery and silverware (cat. 131) attest to the widespread application of pierced-work technique.

In the fifth and sixth centuries there was a notable development in the techniques applied on diverse pieces of jewellery, with more imaginative shapes and polychrome decoration enriched with precious stones, a product of the flourishing trade with the East. At the same time, the subjects used in gold jewellery display a wealth of inspiration and a perfection of execution, contributing to the remarkably mature rendering of each one of these important works of art.

Pieces such as the pair of gold bracelets from the Benaki Museum, Athens (cat. 139) herald the jewellery depicted in the Ravenna mosaics, in a faithful representation of popular types (fig. 30). The wide lunate necklace with pendent stones, worn by Theodora, recalls in its shape and coloration the necklace with eleven trapezoidal plaques forming a crescent (cat. 121). The necklace with stone cabochons worn by the empress is a type that is repeated in necklaces such as cats 123 and 124 and others. By the same token, the bracelet worn by a girl in the empress's retinue is fashioned from a broad band with round catch-plate, as on certain bracelets (cats 140, 142 and 143), each of which represents a characteristic type. Finally, the fibulae that hold in place the chitons of the men in the entourage are indispensable accessories of the uniform of high officials (cat. 134).

In the period that followed, and until the reign of Herakleios, the trend seems to have been towards heavier jewellery, such as the gold breast-chain in the British Museum (cat. 126), in which, moreover, the subjects are rendered with particular clarity and, although the workmanship is less refined, there is perfect attention to detail. Motifs of Hellenistic origin continue to have

precedence in the choices of decoration, while the very wide diffusion of the prevailing types to all coasts of the Mediterranean corroborates the attribution of inspiration to Constantinople, a centre whose influence on the artistic currents of the age radiated far and wide.

The hoards,<sup>3</sup> hidden for safekeeping and found throughout the Eastern Mediterranean – scattered from Constantinople, Mersine in Russia, Assiut in Egypt (cats 121, 127), Lambousa in Cyprus (cats 36, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45), Mytilene in Greece (cats 130, 137), or Rome – provide useful information. They share common motifs, while accompanying finds such as coins and silver assay marks give chronological data, as well as projecting an exceptional sense of quality and luxury.

Towards the end of the seventh century, certain types of jewellery were produced on an impressive scale. Examples include the lunate earrings with pierced-work representations of confronted birds flanking a cross, a tree or a fountain (cats 157, 158). The presence of this heraldic and symbolic scene in all artistic genres – sculpture, painting and diverse minor arts –

shows among other things the direct relation of jewellery to great art in the powerful presence of Christian symbolisms.

The Persian Wars, the destruction of hitherto flourishing cities, the Arab conquests, the slump in trade and the turmoil of iconoclasm were all contributory factors to the more general crisis in art and the consequent recession in jewellery production. The absence of finds with traits that can be associated with the eighth century and the beginning of the ninth underlines the hiatus prior to the ascent of the Macedonian dynasty. However, the general revival and heyday that immediately followed had its effect on jewellery as well. Polychromy was now achieved by compositions in enamel. At first, as can be seen on the bracelet from Thessaloniki (cat. 141), the penchant for floral decoration with the interpolation of birds continued, but theological subjects soon held sway almost exclusively and jewellery took on the role of amulet (cat. 201), in which technique and thematic repertoire follow the applications of enamelling in larger works, such as Gospel-book covers (cat. 82), cross-reliquaries, chalices or icons.<sup>4</sup> In parallel, amulets

Fig. 30  
A sixth-century  
mosaic showing  
Empress Theodora  
and her retinue.  
San Vitale, Ravenna.





with representations of Christ, the Virgin and religious scenes were carved in stones, sometimes as luxurious pieces of jewellery, sometimes as items for everyday wear (cat.200).

One exception to the strictly Christian thematic repertoire is the crown of Constantine Monomachos, on which, as a typical element of the revival of some Hellenistic memory, besides the empresses Zoe and Theodora, two dancing girls and personifications of Truth and Humility are represented alongside the emperor, who ruled from 1042 to 1055. Together with the crown<sup>5</sup> that Emperor Michael VII Doukas presented as a gift to King Géza I of Hungary, which features effigies of both monarchs with Christ and Archangels, these pieces highlight the role played by jewellery of this calibre in Byzantine diplomacy.

After the tenth century, the use of pierced-work technique to variegate the gold surface of jewellery was ousted by filigree, in which the decorative motifs are executed in fine twisted wire. Filigree combined with granulation (cat.272) held sway in the ensuing centuries and continued to be applied in post-Byzantine creations in the minor arts. Examples of jewellery with filigree decoration are the earrings (cat.283) and the bracelets (cats 273, 274) from the Markova Varoš hoard, which once again bespeak their wide diffusion in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Niello is yet another

decorative medium that was employed in Byzantine works in the minor arts, primarily on silver vessels, from the earliest years. It was used alongside enamel to represent Christological scenes on crosses and amulets, such as the cross from Pliska (cat.53).

After the Sack of Constantinople in 1204, defence of the state and political rivalries were the overriding concerns. With the regaining of the capital in 1261, the palace, churches and monuments were renovated and refurbished. Painting enjoyed a new floruit, with distinctive characteristics. By contrast, important Palaiologan works in the minor arts have not survived. Due to the combination of dire economic straits and successive pillaging, which came in the wake of the sack, it is not possible to trace a conscious path of development in jewellery during the final phase of the empire.

Nevertheless, in images not only of emperors but also of ordinary people (fig.31), aesthetically and technically exquisite pieces of jewellery continue to appear. Finally, the fact that after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, in Greece mainly as well as in Asia Minor, significant jewellery continued to be produced,<sup>6</sup> whose value lies in its technical and aesthetic excellence rather than in the sumptuousness of the materials, suggests that jewellery from the Palaiologan period was not as austere as it appears from the surviving examples.

Fig. 31  
A fourteenth-century  
fresco showing the  
Marriage at Cana.

St Nicholas Orphanos,  
Thessalonika



## 119

### Gold pendant

Eastern Mediterranean or  
southern Baltic, Early Byzantine,  
sixth-seventh century  
Gold foil, gilt copper-alloy pins,  
diameter 9.5 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond,  
Purchase, the Adolph D. and Wilken C. Williams  
Fund, 66.76





120 →

#### Necklace

c. 330–350

Gold, precious stones (twelve missing), 12.8 × 22.8 cm, plaques 2.6 × 2.2 cm

Σ. P. Goussier, *Les bijoux de l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1981, p. 101

121 ↖

#### The Berlin Collar

Second half of the sixth or first half of the seventh century

Gold, emeralds, sapphires, one amethyst, pearls, diameter 23 cm

Σ. P. Goussier, *Les bijoux de l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1981, p. 101

122 →

#### Necklace

Constantinople (?), seventh century

Gold, length 55.5; diameter of medallions 2.5 cm

Σ. P. Goussier, *Les bijoux de l'Antiquité*, Paris, 1981, p. 101







### 123 ←

#### Necklace

Antinoë, Egypt, fifth century  
Gold with sapphires, amethysts,  
emeralds and pearls,  
length 42.8 cm

Breidå Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1738

### 124 ↓

#### Chain necklace

Byzantium, sixth-seventh century  
Gold and semi-precious stones,  
length 45.7 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 54.344



### 125 →

#### Gold necklace with sapphires and emeralds

Probably Constantinople, late  
sixth-early seventh century  
Gold, emerald, sapphire, sardonyx,  
pearls, length 79 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung,  
inv. no. 30219, 30218



### 126 →

#### Gold body-chain

Byzantine, sixth-early  
seventh century AD  
Gold, length 72 cm; diameter  
of large medallions 7.78 cm;  
weight 643.2 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
PE 19.65.7-1.1









127

Gold necklace with pendant

Probably Egypt, late sixth–early seventh century  
Gold, diameter of necklace 23.5 cm; height of pendant 11.7 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 30.200, 1967.200a



128

Gold coin-set pendant

Eastern Mediterranean (?), mid- to late fourth century AD  
Gold, diameter 9.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, Pl. 1984.30.1.5



129

Gold pendant cross with Christ, the Virgin, St John and two saints

Egypt (?), 600–750  
Gold, 8 × 5.3 cm

Donnell-Carter Collection, Washington, DC, Beantown Collection, BZ 1957.24





130

# Chain

Sixth-seventh centuries

Gold, length of chain 91 cm; length of pendant 2.3 cm; width 3.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, 1804 Bp

131

# Gold body-chain

Gallo-Roman, late fourth century

Gold, amethyst, garnet, length of individual chains, 37-8 cm; weight 249.5 g.

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE.1994.4.8.1







### 132 ← Gold belt-buckle

Constantinople, seventh century  
Gold, length 7.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PL 1989.3.41.1

### 133 ↙ Gold strap-end

Constantinople, seventh century  
Gold, 3 × 2.4 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PL 1989.3.41.2



### 134 Crossbow fibula

Constantinople (?), c. 480  
Gold, 11.9 × 5.5 × 4 cm

Lent to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1993, 1993.507







135 ←

Bracelet

Eleventh–twelfth century  
Silver, repoussé, chased, traces of  
gilding, niello, 2.2 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11498



136 ←

Bracelet

Eleventh century  
Silver, repoussé, chased, partial  
gilding, niello, 3.3 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11457



137 ←

Bracelets

Sixth–seventh centuries  
Gold, diameter 5.5–6.1 cm; width  
0.1–0.55 cm; diameter 5.5–6.05  
cm; width 0.1–0.55 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, 1934 B16, 1934 B15



138 →

Pair of bracelets

Fourth or early fifth century  
Gold with sapphires and emeralds,  
diameter 8.5–11.6 cm; diameter  
8.7–11.4 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond  
The Adolph D. and Wilcox C. Williams Fund, 67  
52.31.1/2



139 →

Pair of bracelets

Cyprus (?), sixth century  
Gold, diameter 9 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. nos 11455–11456



140 →

Bracelet

Rome (?), fifth century  
Gold, 6.8 × 5.9 × 4.6 cm,  
strap 15.5 cm

Loan by the Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917  
(17.190.1668)

(Only one of the illustrated  
pair is exhibited)





I41 ↓

Bracelet

Probably from Constantinople,  
ninth or tenth centuries  
Gold and glass, 5.7 × 8.6 × 6.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of  
Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, 1800 262/62



I42 ↑

Bracelet

Constantinople (?), sixth-  
seventh century  
Gold, silver, pearls, amethysts,  
sapphires, glass, quartz and  
emerald plasma, diameter 8.2 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
New York, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917  
(17.199.1670)



I43 ↓

Gold bracelet with a bust  
of the Mother of God

Eastern Mediterranean, c. AD 600  
Gold, depth of hoop 6.7 cm;  
depth of medallion 4.4 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
PE 19 351



I44 ↓

Gold openwork bracelet

Eastern Mediterranean, fourth  
century

Gold, diameter 10 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung,  
inv.-nr. 30/210, 5095





145

Pectoral cross

Thirteenth–fourteenth century

Gold, lapis lazuli, 4 × 6.7 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 0151



146 →

Gold ring with *opus interrasile* decoration

Rome, around 300

Gold, diameter 2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. no. 1907.0501.007



147 →

Finger ring with the Annunciation

Sixth or seventh century

Gold and niello, diameter 1.6 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 0130



148 →

Finger ring with monogram and eagle device

Sixth or seventh century

Gold, diameter 2.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 0129



149 →

Finger ring with swivel bezel

Sixth–seventh century

Gold, diameter 2.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 0107



150 →

Gold and niello marriage-ring

Eastern Mediterranean, sixth or seventh century

Gold, niello, diameter of hoop 2.3 cm; diameter of bezel 1.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 230



151 →

Gold ring with monogram

Constantinople (?), thirteenth–fifteenth century

Gold, diameter 2.65 cm; length of bezel 1.13 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 270



152 →

Finger ring

Fourteenth century

Gold, diameter 2.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 0139







153 ←  
Earrings  
Fourth century  
Gold and glass paste with emeralds  
and cornelians, height 4.2 cm  
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1672

154 ↙  
Earrings  
Antinoe, Egypt, fifth century  
Gold with sapphires and pearls,  
height 9 cm  
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1779



155 ↓  
Earrings  
Fifth-sixth century  
Gold with sapphires, pearls and  
glass, height 9.7 cm  
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1807

156 ↘  
Gold earring with pearls  
and enamel  
Eastern Mediterranean,  
tenth or eleventh century  
Gold, with pearls and enamel,  
height 6.6 × 3.3 cm  
The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
P&E 1983.5-2.1



157 →  
Earrings  
Seventh century  
Gold, height 4.4 cm  
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1870

158 ↘  
Earrings  
Constantinople (?),  
seventh or eighth century  
Gold, 6.8 cm  
The Paul and Alexandra Kanellopoulos Museum,  
Athens, inv. no. 1127 a-b





159 →

Tapestry shawl with vase  
and vine with figures

Egypt, fourth or fifth century  
Linen and wool, 23 × 17.5 cm

Beraki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 7127

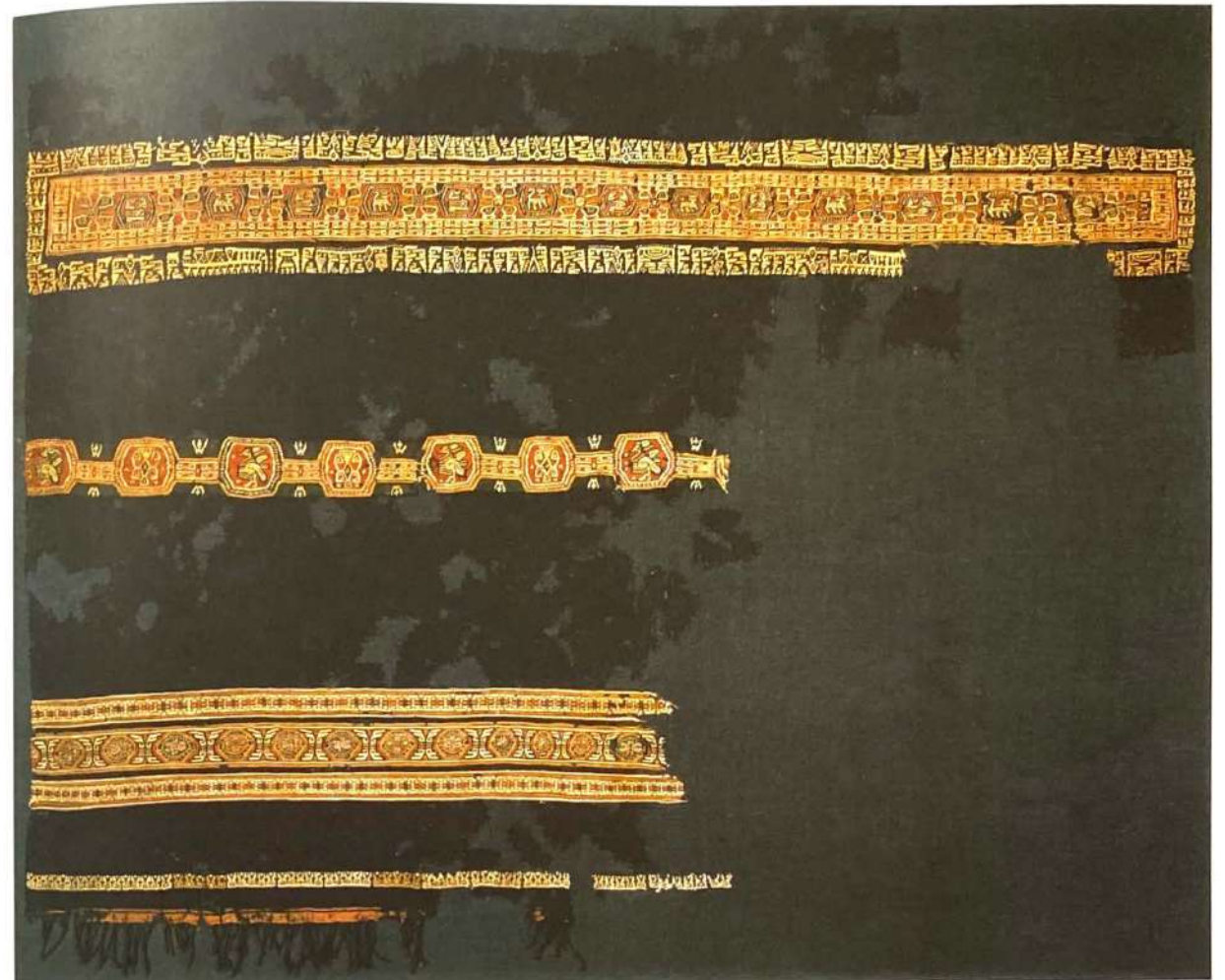


160 ↓

Resist-dyed panel showing  
the Nativity

Fifth-sixth century  
Dyed linen, 47 × 95.5 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London



161

Fragment of a shawl

Egypt, Fayum, ninth-tenth century  
Wool with tapestry bands of wool  
and linen, 74 × 91.5 cm

Beraki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 15608





162

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, late tenth–twelfth century  
Bone, carved and black organic material, 15.6 × 6.2 cm

Beraki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10730

163

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, tenth–twelfth century  
Bone, carved and black organic material, 11.2 × 2.4 cm

Beraki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10731

164

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, ninth–eleventh century  
Bone, carved and black pigment, 16 × 4 cm

Beraki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10732



165

Child's tunic with a hood

Egypt, sixth–eighth century  
Wool, 65 × 83 cm

Beraki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 7060



166

Pair of child's sandals

Egypt, fifth–seventh centuries  
Stamped leather, 12.8 × 5.1 cm

Beraki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 21050





167 +

Comb with personifications of Rome and Constantinople

Alexandria (?), second half of the sixth century

Ivory, 16.3 × 5.5 cm

Beside Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11017

168 +

Comb with marine deities

Alexandria (?), sixth century

Ivory, 14.5 × 8.25 cm

Beside Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11018



169

Small amphora

Egypt, fifth century

Copper alloy cast in parts, with incised and punched decoration, height 22.2 cm; side of base 8.5 cm

Beside Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11019







# 5

## At Church

LIZ JAMES



THE CHRISTIAN FAITH was at the centre of Byzantine life.<sup>1</sup> Across the empire, Orthodoxy united people otherwise unconnected by language, ethnicity or culture. It was a shared identity: an Orthodox believer from Constantinople could enter an Orthodox church in Kiev or Alexandria or Sicily and immediately feel at home; a mosque or a Western church were both equally alien. As Gregory Melissenos, the confessor to Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, put it: 'When I enter a Latin church, I do not revere any of the saints who are there because I do not recognise them.'<sup>2</sup> Everyone was involved in religion in some way, whether as Orthodox, heretic or unbeliever. Religious disputes over the right ways to conceive of and worship God, Christ, the Mother of God and the saints punctuate Byzantine history, providing a constant narrative of Orthodox belief versus heretical challenge. The winners would always take the title Orthodox and brand their opponents as heretics. The feasts and saints' days of the Christian calendar marked out the rhythms of daily life; images of the divine were everywhere in daily life, from stamps of the Cross on loaves of bread to the Mother of God on coins. As a result, church was the most important building in the life of any Byzantine, the place where the rituals of faith were conducted, and the setting for humanity's communion with the divine, God's dwelling place on earth.<sup>3</sup>

That churches mattered more than any other type of building is apparent from the number that still exist, the quantity of surviving ecclesiastical objects and the sheer mass of textual references. Anyone who could afford it could build a church – and a surprising number did, for such buildings were both a sign of one's devotion to God and a perpetual prayer for salvation. Churches could be very personal foundations: many were built by individual patrons for their own family or personal

monastic use; others were funded by groups of individuals, sometimes villagers. Very many were monasteries. Although large-scale and impressive churches were built throughout most of the Byzantine period, many were small structures, intimate and confined.

Inside the church, architecture, decoration and sacred objects came together in a celebration of the divine. Art historians often talk of the 'decorative scheme' of Byzantine churches. Church art, however, was considerably more than decorative. Because the church was regarded as heaven on earth, each part of the church, its decoration and fixtures and fittings, reflected its part in this role, as well as their own specific function.

As a result, the architecture of a Byzantine church was both utilitarian, relating to the forms of worship that took place within it, and symbolic, carrying a deeper spiritual meaning.<sup>4</sup> Unlike a Western medieval church, where the worshipper is directed in a linear fashion, west to east, the Byzantine church is centralised. By perhaps the tenth century, the most common plan of a Byzantine church was the cross-in-square church with a central dome (figs 32, 33). The most popular version of this plan placed the dome on four columns within a square, but variations on the theme were multiple. The congregation tended to enter the nave, or *naos*, via a porch, called a narthex, at the west end of the church. The *naos* itself was square or rectangular in plan, but often divided by columns and piers. It was roofed by a dome, and the effect of that was to create a centralised, focused space, a vertical axis rather than a horizontal one. This was the space for the congregation, men on the right and women on the left. At the east end of the church, the sanctuary was divided into three, a central area where the altar was located, flanked by two smaller side areas, one to the north, where

Communion was prepared and the paten and chalice stored, and one to the south for vestments and sacred books. The sanctuary as a whole was increasingly hidden behind the iconostasis (icon screen) or templon and reserved for the priesthood.

Mosaic was the material above all chosen to create a divine spectacle. Here art and architecture combined beautifully, the curved surfaces of the cross-in-square church interacting with the tesserae (cubes of glass) making up a mosaic. On close inspection, the fragment depicting St Andrew (fig. 34) shows how each tessera was inserted individually into a plaster background on site to construct an image, and that this created an otherworldly spectacle of moving, reflected light. Paint was the next best thing to mosaic work, and the effect of paint within a church was to create a totally different visual display, darker and more intense.

The combination of *naos* as centralised space and sanctuary as an area set apart related to the nature of Byzantine religious services. On the whole, the congregation could listen to the priests, but not observe their activities. Certain activities – Bible readings and the delivery of

homilies – took place at the doors of the iconostasis but the liturgy (the term refers to the Eucharist, but will be used here for any regular church service) was built around dramatic appearances of the clergy from the sanctuary at key points in the service displaying the Gospels and the sacraments.

In symbolic terms, the parts of the church were divided both vertically and horizontally and each part could be given a spiritual meaning. Vertically, emphasis has traditionally lain on the images within the church. These have long been understood as working in three registers. At the highest levels, the cupolas and apses are decorated with Christ, the Mother of God and angels. Below are scenes from the life of Christ, often called a 'festival cycle' because they have been seen as scenes representing the Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the lowest level is made up of saints, usually shown as single standing figures.

In this way, the top level represents heaven and, indeed, the central dome is most often occupied by Christ whose presence, though not visible to worshippers unless they chose to look right up, nevertheless hung over them

Figs 32, 33  
Exterior and plan  
of the early eleventh-  
century monastery  
church of Hosios  
Loukas, near  
Distomo, in Boeotia

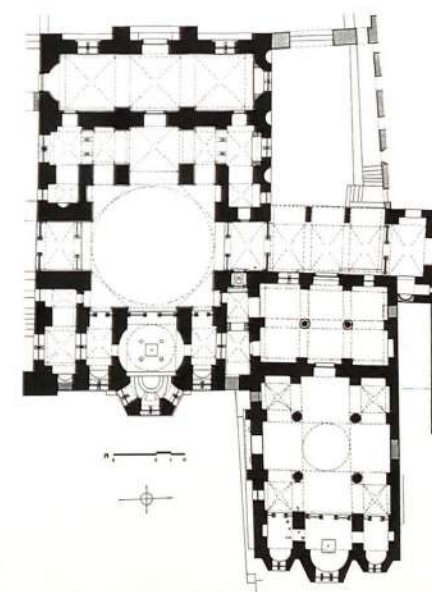






Fig. 34  
The interior of the  
monastery church  
of Hosios Loukas

throughout their time in the building. In the apse, the Mother of God, bearing the Child, served to illustrate the Incarnation, proving that God became Man, was born of a Virgin and saved humankind. Below this, the scenes from the life of Christ could be understood in several ways. A common view is that they acted as books for the illiterate, a teaching tool for those who came to worship but who could not read. This is a convenient interpretation of the meaning of pictures in churches but it does not always match the reality, which is that such scenes were often uncomfortably high above worshippers and even

beyond their sight. Rather, they made Christ's life present and visible as an eternal witness to Christian truths and a reassurance to believers. Finally, the saints, both on the walls and as icons, on the lowest level, closest to the worshippers, physically surrounded the viewers in the *naos*. They gazed out at worshippers, seeming to meet their eyes, acting as the first focus for worshippers on entering the church, as do the icons of Theodore Tiro and St James. The worshipper's first act was to make a circuit of these images, often the special saints of each church, displayed on stands (known as *proskynetaria*), venerating them through kissing them, lighting candles in front of them and touching them.<sup>6</sup> This corporeal contact with the saints enabled the faithful to share their power, as the likenesses were not understood by the Byzantines simply as pictures but as images which contained the authority of the divine figure. At the start of the liturgy, congregation and icons alike were censed and, in this way, both became equal participants and equal presences in the liturgy, forming a part of the communion of saints. Russian envoys to St Sophia in the tenth century were convinced that the angels descended from the mosaics to join in the celebration.<sup>7</sup> So images within the church drew the spectator into contemplation of the divine events and, beyond that, into participation in divine worship.<sup>8</sup>

Icons filled churches. Over time the interior of the Byzantine church went through a series of significant changes, stimulated by the desire to increase the sanctity of the altar and to emphasise the power of icons. In the Early Byzantine church the laity could visually participate in all the stages of the liturgy performed by the priests behind a low chancel barrier between the nave and the altar. But this gradually changed, and in the sixth century the Church of St Sophia at Constantinople was

enhanced with a higher screen, the so-called tempon screen, in front of the altar. This type of screen was found in other churches before iconoclasm, but it rapidly became the norm after iconoclasm, usually in marble as in the church at Skripou in 873/74 (cats 183, 184). By the twelfth century, icons were laid over the top of the epistyle (like the beam on Mount Athos with icons of the main church festivals, the Raising of Lazarus and the Transfiguration, as in cat. 216). Between the columns of the tempon, icons or curtains were gradually inserted. As a result of these structures, the priest now performed part of the liturgy behind an opaque screen, enhancing the idea of the invisible holy of holies in the church and allowing him to make entrances into the church at dramatic moments in the liturgy. The tendency to separate laity from priesthood reached its final stage with the thirteenth-century development of the high iconostasis, a screen covered with icons which totally concealed the altar unless the central doors (usually decorated with an Annunciation, as cat. 281) were opened. The iconostasis included a whole range of icons for veneration, including the Deesis, the patronal saint of the church, the major festivals of the church, and other saints and prophets, and might be surmounted with a crucifixion.

Each church appears to have had its own diverse collection of saints. A saint may appear almost anywhere on the walls of a church, and be grouped with a variety of other saints from a range of dates in the liturgical calendar.<sup>9</sup> Although it has been suggested that saints are organised by rank, function and place in the calendar of the Church, this is not the case. Though saints within the Church certainly form defined groups – prophets, Apostles, such as St Andrew, Evangelists, martyrs, bishops, warrior saints, healer saints – the apparently arbitrary nature of the choice of individual saints portrayed within each church suggests that the

individual nature and role of the church was important in picking the saints. Indeed, it is possible that churches were personalised through their choice of saint: the individual patrons, the type of monk, the type of church must all have been significant factors in the choices of saints.

Such was the setting for the liturgy, which was itself a performance celebrated with appropriate trappings within the space of the church (fig. 35). Many services took place early in the morning or at dusk, and churches were often small and relatively dark. As a result, lighting was of great importance, and church inventories and *typika* (foundation documents) regularly discuss the lighting devices in their particular building. Candles and oil lamps (cats 218, 219) provided artificial light; they might be suspended in glittering candelabra (cats 170, 171) and chandeliers, or placed in candlesticks.

The importance of the liturgy meant that liturgical vessels and books were valued highly and made of precious materials. The key liturgical vessels were the chalice, paten (cats 20, 80) and asterisk (for the Eucharistic wine and bread), and the associated vessels for the preparation of the Communion, the flabellum, or fan, the censer used throughout the service to cense congregation, altar and church. Processional crosses (cats 190, 191) were employed in the entry processions of the clergy and went before the Gospel-book. Altar tables too could be precious and lavishly decorated.<sup>10</sup> They, the bread and wine, the chalice and paten were all covered with appropriate textiles, often silks heavily embroidered in gold. The priests themselves had vestments appropriate for each service. The *epitrachelion* was an embroidered strip of cloth worn around the neck that all priests were obliged to wear when approaching the sanctuary, while the *epigonation* was a stiff gold-embroidered piece of cloth that hung from the girdle to the knee.



Books were especially holy because they contained the word of God. Consequently, they were often lavishly decorated and sumptuously bound, showing proper respect to God. The liturgy is an elaborate interweaving of texts from psalms, both read and sung, of passages from the Gospels and Epistles or Prophets, of a large number of prayers, some chanted, of short readings about the saints whose day it is, and of hymns. All of these needed books. Liturgical texts were not assembled into one book but in fact spread across several volumes. The prayers said by the priest in liturgy were uniquely written on a long scroll rolled to the correct place and held up by the deacon for the priest. These scrolls tended not to be heavily illuminated: the Patmos liturgical roll has an elaborate frontispiece

showing St Basil the Great celebrating the liturgy inside an elaborate marble building, but the rest of its illustrations are initials, both religious and secular. Gospel texts were arranged in a lectionary, where they were divided into sets of lessons arranged according to the day of the year on which passage was to be read. The Gospel-book (cat. 205) played an active part in the liturgy, for it was carried out into church from the prothesis, and taken through the sanctuary doors into the bema, or sanctuary, where it was placed on the altar. This action symbolised, among other things, the entry of the Word of God into the world. As a result, Gospel-books frequently had impressive covers and less attention might be paid to their internal decoration. Indeed, there is a case for suggesting that some of the most elaborately decorated Gospel-books in Byzantium were never actually used but may have simply sat on the altar as representations of Christ's incarnate wisdom, just as the bread and wine of the Eucharist were his body and blood. However, hundreds of illustrated Gospel-books survive, showing a variety of ways of illustrating the narrative. Some use frontispieces with Gospel scenes, some have narrative strips between blocks of text; most have Evangelist portraits. Lectionaries (cats 61, 304) contained liturgical readings drawn from the Bible for the Eucharist, and from saints' lives, the Church Fathers and the Councils of the Church for other services.

The psalter was perhaps the most important book in Byzantine daily life, to the extent that children learned to read and write from it or even, as in the bilingual psalter here, Western adults might learn Greek from it (cat. 177). In church, psalms were sung throughout the liturgy. In parish churches, they were selected for relevance to that day's feast; in monasteries, they were sung in biblical order over the course of the services. Both monks and lay singers must have

known the psalter by heart – as, probably, did most of the congregation. At least 85 illuminated psalters survive and no two are the same. Illustrated in various ways, they offer numerous interpretations, meditations and commentaries on the psalms. Surprisingly, despite ways in which the psalms were used in liturgy, the texts are never rearranged to reflect this but always maintain their biblical order. To help monks in the recitation of the psalms, psalters were organised into twenty sections or *kathismata*, each containing between one and five psalms. To aid memory even further, each *kathisma* was subdivided into three. There are far fewer Old Testament books than New, in part reflecting their lesser place in the liturgy. The Book of Job, however, is one of the most popular, and over twelve illustrated copies survive.

The church was also a place where people might make individual offerings. Some took the form of votive gifts left for Christ, the Mother of God or the saints in prayer or in thanks for benefits received (cat. 198). Relics of saints were precious, offering the faithful a direct contact with the actual, tangible holy, and every altar supposedly contained a relic. Such remains could vary from a minute splinter of wood from the True Cross (cats 182, 188), encased as befitted its status, or a morsel of bone from a saint to the whole head or a hand of a saint. Such special relics also acted as magnets for pilgrims to the church.

The materials used to create the images and objects at church reflected both the resources available to the patrons and the importance of religion, for it was the patrons' duty to give of their best to God. There was a hierarchy of materials: mosaic and paint; gold, silver, bronze, brass, copper; and materials themselves might carry a symbolic meaning. Gold, for example, did not tarnish and so

represented purity. Purple staining of pages of books represented not only an increase in price but also a comment on imperial status, purple being *the* imperial colour reserved for the emperor. Micro-mosaic icons were a highly specialised, particularly costly form of mosaic; the level and detail of skill needed to work on this scale using minute tesserae, each placed individually in position, surely with tweezers, is simply staggering. Objects might be further decorated with even more precious materials, inlaid in enamel perhaps (cats 199, 245) or gilded, and decorated with ornament and scenes appropriate to their use, as with the Riha Paten used for Eucharistic bread, where the Last Supper is depicted (cat. 20). And size always mattered. It related not only to cost, but also to function: small books were often intended to be read in private.

Within the church, architecture, imagery, the liturgy, as well as sights, sounds and smells, including voices, incense, smoke and candle-wax, heat and bodies, hard, polished floors, glittering materials, all combined to create the effect of translating the worshipper into a sphere beyond the worldly, and to translate the church into heaven, in order to move being 'at church' to being 'with God'.

Fig. 35  
The interior of  
St Catherine's on  
Mount Sinai, with  
a service in progress







170

Chandelier (*choras*)

Thirteenth–fourteenth century  
Cast copper alloy, diameter 350  
cm; height (without hangings)  
c. 165 cm

Archäologische Staatssammlung, Munich





171

Copper-alloy  
polycandelon

Eastern Mediterranean, c.550–650  
Copper-alloy, length of suspension  
and 37 cm; diameter of disk 28 cm.  
The Treasures of the British Museum, London,  
inv. 1984.100.25



172

Church bell

Serbia, 2 August 1432  
Cast bronze, height 72 cm;  
diameter 55 cm

Pec, Patriarchate

173

Rodop's bell

Serbia, 2 August 1432  
Cast bronze, 58 × 43 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2072



174

Copper alloy plaque with  
the Hodegetria and saints

Byzantium, tenth or  
eleventh century  
Copper alloy, 9.5 × 10.8 cm

The Treasures of the British Museum, London,  
inv. 1984.103.1





175 ←  
Homilies on the Virgin  
Mary by James  
Kokkinobaphos, folio 3v  
Constantinople, first half of  
the twelfth century  
Manuscript on parchment,  
23 × 16.5 cm  
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Gr 1240

176 →  
Perfume brazier in the  
form of a domed building  
Constantinople or Italy,  
end of the twelfth century  
Silver, partially gilded, embossed  
and perforated, 36 × 30 cm  
Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 109



177 →  
Psalter with the  
veneration of an icon of  
the Virgin Mary  
Hodegetria, folio 39v-40r  
Constantinople and Cyprus,  
around 1300  
Tempera and gold on parchment,  
Latin and Greek bilingual Psalter  
and other texts of various dates, 29  
× 24 cm  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett,  
78 A 9 (Hamilton 199)





uñillus eram inter fratres  
meos

et ad dolorem in domo  
patris mei

μενιρῶς  
λαμνῶς  
τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς  
μου

λαμ  
μενιρῶς  
τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς  
μου



λαμνῶς μου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου

patribus meis  
meis







178 +

Tray with representation  
of the Apostles Peter and  
Paul flanking a cross

Carthage, around 400

Clay, 37.9 × 39.8 cm; width of  
frame 4.3 cm

*British Museum, Athens, inv. nos. 12 p 1, 478,  
12 p 10, 12 p 11 (measured from four shards  
and reassembled)*



179 ✕

Gilt-copper plaque with  
St Theodore

Byzantium (Constantinople?),  
mid-eleventh century

Gilt copper, 12.5 × 6.7 cm

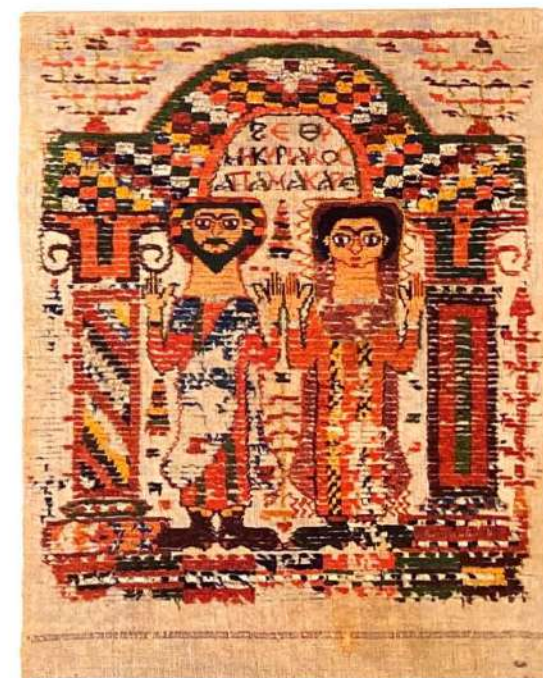
*The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
PbO 196, 74.3*

180 ↓

Textile hanging with  
St Makarios and woman  
in prayer

Egypt, fourth or fifth century  
Linen and wool, 105 × 86 cm

*British Museum, Athens, inv. no. 7133*



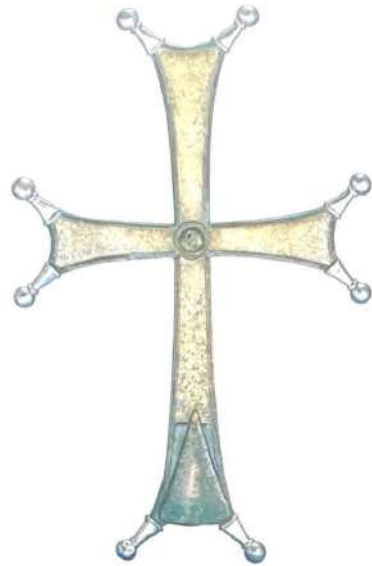


181 +

# Reliquary sarcophagus

Byzantium, fifth-seventh century  
Marble agglomerate,  
27 × 51 × 23.5 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire  
de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. 40.7994



182 →

# Reliquary crucifix

Constantinople, first half of  
the tenth century, Monastery  
of St Michael, Damokrancia  
(now Güzelce)  
Partially gilded silver crucifix  
holder, 36.4 × 23.7 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire  
de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. 40.7994

(The crucifix [above] and  
the sarcophagus [left] are  
for illustrative purposes only  
and are not exhibited)







183 ↑

Epistyle from the Church  
of the Koimesis at  
Skripou

Made on site, at Skripou, 873/74  
Marble, 18.5 × 33.3 × 33.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate  
of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 46

184 ←

Closure panel with two  
peacocks

Thebes, twelfth century  
Marble, 57 × 60 × 9.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate  
of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 8314



185 ←

Double-sided closure  
panel

Thebes, ninth century  
Marble, 88.3 × 105.8 × 10.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate  
of Byzantine Antiquities, inv. no. 8249

186 →

Double-sided closure  
panel

Thebes (?), 872/73  
Marble, 97.5 × 73.8 × 9.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate  
of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 8246









187

Silver chalice

Syria, Early Byzantine,  
sixth century

Silver with niello and gilding.  
18 × 26.6 × 16 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Edward J.  
and Mary S. Holmes Fund, 1971/933







188 ←

# Reliquary of the True Cross

Southern Italy (?), late twelfth century or c. 1200  
Silver gilt, cloisonné opaque enamel on a silver gilt support, wood, glass paste, 24 × 11.7 × 1.5 cm  
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, inv. no. CA1531



189 ←

# Processional cross

Constantinople, first half of eleventh century  
Cast copper alloy, hammered, engraved and punched, 36 × 30.1 × 0.3 cm  
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 01147

190 ←

# Processional cross

Byzantium, probably twelfth century  
Bronze, engraved and embossed, 68 × 46.3 × 2.6 cm  
Collection des Musées d'Art et d'Histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 0310





191

# Processional cross

Constantinople or north-western  
Anatolia, late eleventh or early  
twelfth century

Silver, silver gilt, niello, iron core  
and bronze shaft, 73 × 39 cm

Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen Âge,  
Paris, inv. no. Cl. 2393



192

# The Cross of Adrianople

Late tenth century

Silver sheets, with engraving,  
partial gilding and niello  
decoration, riveted around an  
iron core, 58.5 × 31 × 0.4 cm

Breake Museum, Adrianople, inv. no. 1504







193 ←

Gold cross with  
nielloed inscription

Eastern Mediterranean,  
eighth century (?)

Gold, niello, height (including  
suspension loop) 7.2 cm; width  
4 cm; weight 42.10 g

The Treasures of the British Museum, London,  
16.40.100

194 →

Pectoral reliquary cross

Eleventh century

Silver sheet, niello, 7.4 × 3.5 cm

British Museum, Athens, inv. nos 1999,  
1999.10994







195 ↑

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia,  
eleventh century  
Copper alloy, 7.3 × 4.3 cm

Benski Museum, Athens, inv. no. 35554

196 ↑

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia,  
eleventh century  
Copper alloy, 8 × 4.5 cm

Benski Museum, Athens, inv. no. 35556

197 ↓

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, late  
tenth or eleventh century  
Copper alloy, 9.5 × 5.5 cm

Benski Museum, Athens, inv. no. 35550-51



198 ↓

Votive hand holding  
a cross

Syria-Palestine, sixth-  
eighth century  
Bronze, 21 × 10 cm; cross,  
13 × 10 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la  
Ville de Genève, inv. no. AA 2014-202



199 →

Pectoral cross with  
Four Evangelists

Constantinople (?), second half  
of the eleventh century  
Gold, filigree, cloisonné and  
champlevé enamel, emeralds,  
tourmaline, pearls, 9 × 6 × 1 cm

State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow,  
inv. no. 664







200 ←

# Lapis-lazuli icon with Christ and the Virgin

Constantinople, first half  
of twelfth century

Lapis encrusted with gold, silver  
gilt, filigree, copper, the modern  
ring: wax, resin, precious stones,  
one pearl, height 8.3 cm, 10 x 10 cm,  
with the ring; lapis: 6.1 x 4.3 cm

Museum of Islamic Art, Department of Objects  
400, 100-100

201 →

# Reliquary *enkolpion*

Middle to late tenth century (?)  
Gold, silver gilt and cloisonné  
enamel, 4.8 x 3.2 x 0.6 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, The  
British Museum, London, 100-100





202

Cameo with  
Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, early thirteenth  
century (cameo); Serbia, Peć  
or Prizren, early seventeenth  
century (setting)

Jasper green, cutting; silver,  
hammering gilding, enamel (blue  
and green); carnelian, mother-of-  
pearl, glass paste, cameo length  
4 cm; width 3.5 cm; setting  
length 7.2 cm; width 6 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 4518



203

Pendant with  
Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople (?), eleventh  
or twelfth century in a  
sixteenth-century mount

Rock crystal, gold, precious stones,  
pearls (mount), 6.1 x 6 x 1.2 cm  
(including mount)

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2113











206 +

Icon with the  
Annunciation and saints

Late twelfth century  
Cult-silver sheet, chased and  
repoussé, 31 × 27 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 91772

207 +

Handle of a standing  
censer (*katzion*)

Constantinople, c.1300  
Bronze, cast with engraved  
decorative detail, 28.6 × 21 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 91772



208 +

Plaque with St George

Asia Minor, fourteenth century  
Bronze, gilded, hammered and  
engraved, silver, 10 × 9.5 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Kanellopoulos Museum,  
Athens, inv. no. X.1507

209 +

Plaque with St Niketas

Thirteenth century  
Bronze, hammered, gilded,  
incised, 7.3 × 6.4 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Kanellopoulos Museum,  
Athens, inv. no. X.1507







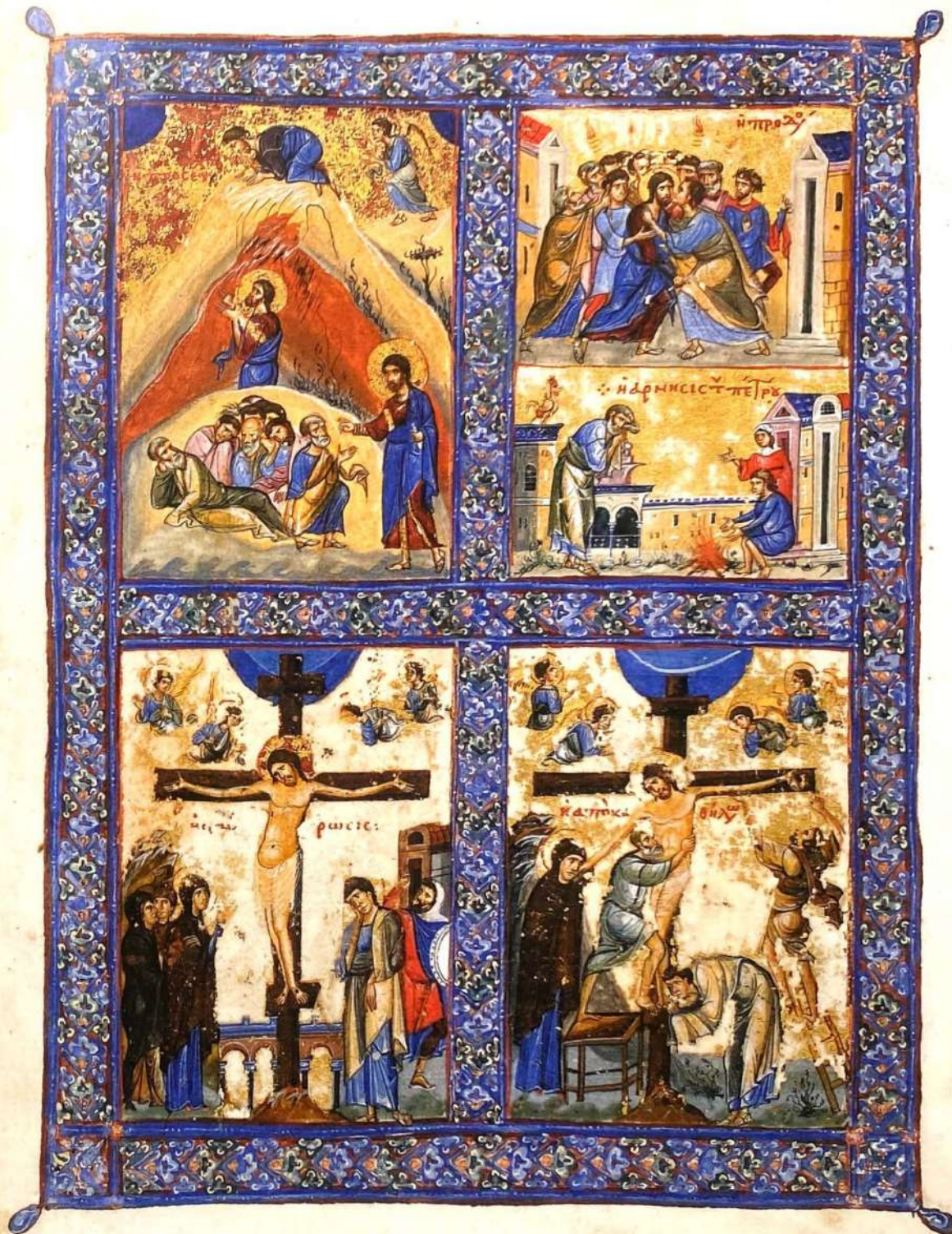
210

Chalice veil

Late thirteenth–early fourteenth  
century

Silk embroidered with silver and  
gilded silver thread; 63.5 × 63.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 9300



211

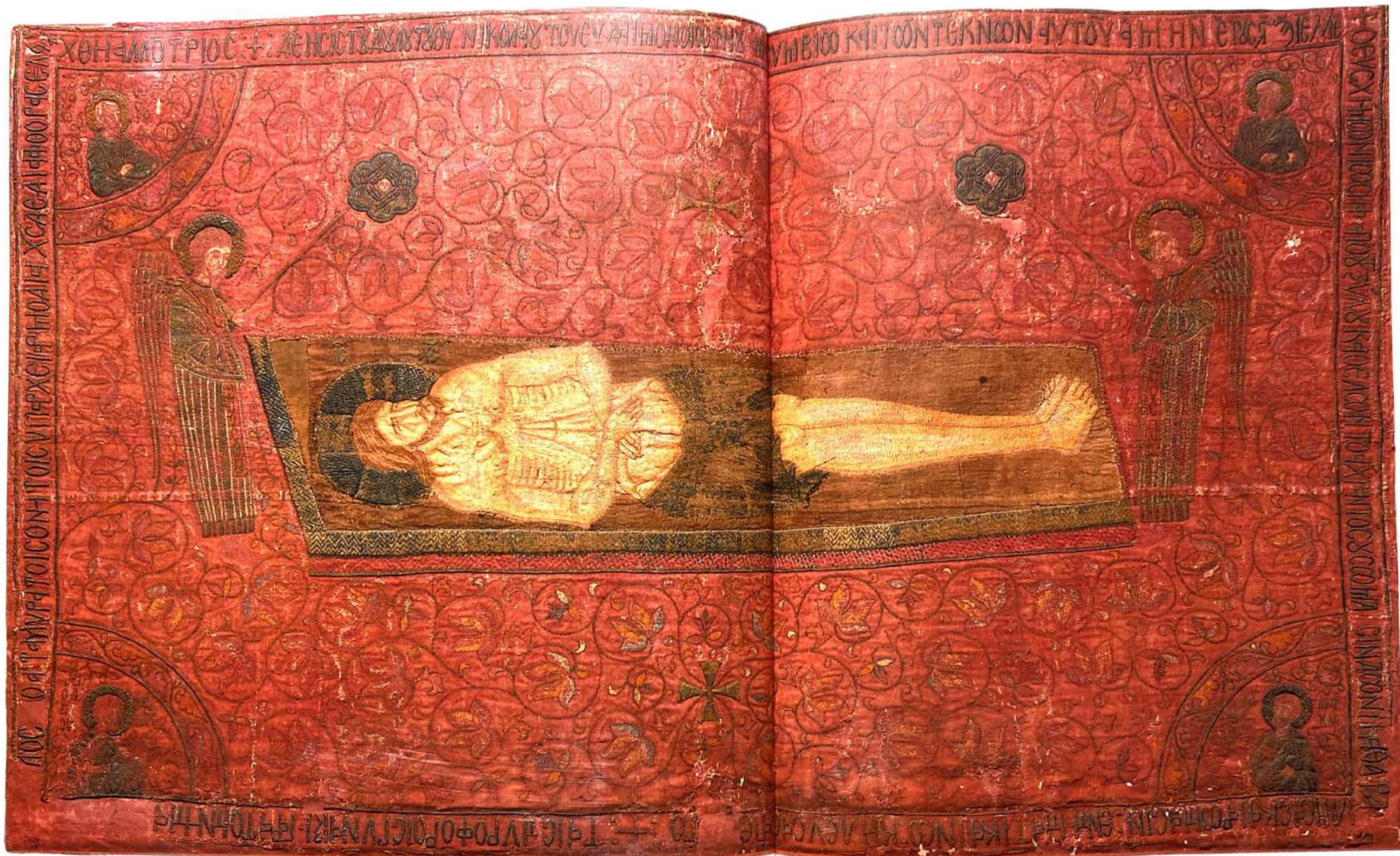
Gospels with the Passion  
of Christ, folio 92r

Constantinople, second half of  
eleventh century

Parchment, 30 × 23.2 cm

Biblioteca Palatina di Parma, Ms. Pal. 5









213

Wall tile with an  
image of St Nicholas

Probably Constantinople,  
tenth century  
Coloured and transparent glazes  
on white ceramic, 16.8 × 16.4 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore,  
inv. 48.2086.1



214

Wall tile with an  
image of St Arethas

Probably Constantinople,  
tenth century  
Coloured and transparent glazes  
on white ceramic, 17.2 × 17.1 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore,  
inv. 48.2086.2



215

*The Raising of Lazarus*

Twelfth century

Egg tempera on wood, 21.5 × 24 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, inv. 980

216

*Epistyle fragment with the  
Transfiguration of Christ*Mount Athos, first half of the  
twelfth centuryChestnut wood, gesso and  
tempera, 23.2 × 23.7 × 2.5 cmState Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg,  
inv. no. 17



217 →

Incense burner

Serbia, Janjevo, fourteenth century  
Bronze, casting, openwork,  
11 × 12.5 × 3.05 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 161



218 →

Brass lamp

Eastern Mediterranean (?),  
fifth-sixth century  
Brass, 27 × 7.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,  
PE. 1979.17.14.1



219 ↓

Oil lamp

Egypt, sixth century  
Quaternary alloy, cast in parts,  
covered with green patina,  
32.1 × 25.5 × 19.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11309



220 ↘

Brass lamp with  
griffin's head handle

Italy (?), fifth-sixth century AD  
Brass, height 15.9 cm; width 7.2 cm;  
length 21.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE.  
1997.0820.1



221

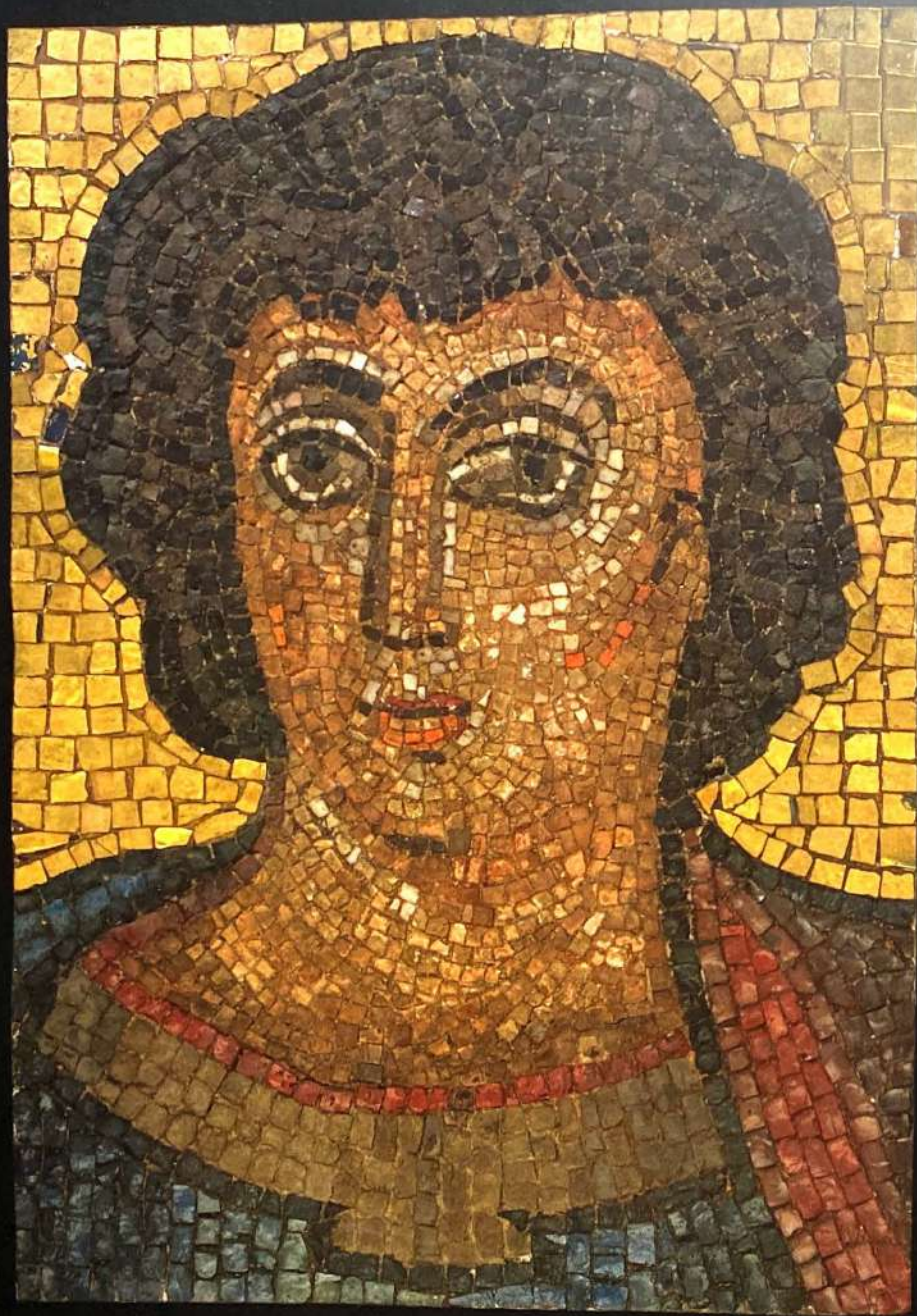
Roundel with the  
Mother of God

1078–84 (?), Constantinople  
Serpentine, diameter 17.5 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, A.1.1977







222 →

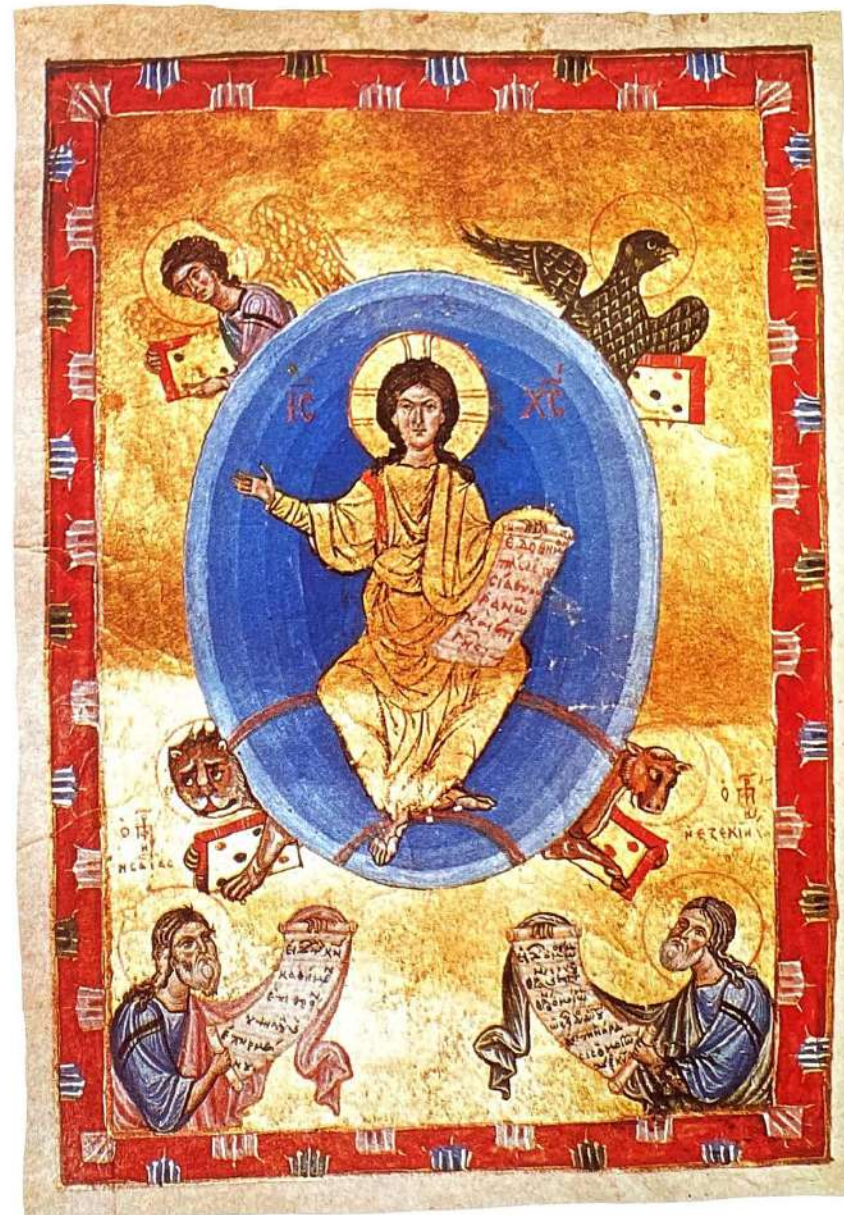
Mosaic with head  
of Christ

Ravenna, 535  
Detached apse mosaic, restored  
in the nineteenth century.  
335 × 38 cm  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1970-1971

223 →

Four Gospels, folio 11v

Constantinople,  
mid-twelfth century  
Parchment, 17.5 × 12.3 cm,  
1 + 275 folios  
Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice,  
Ex 100.135







# 6

## Icons

NANO CHATZIDAKIS



BYZANTINE ICONS ORIGINATE from the Late Antique tradition of painted portraits, such as the funerary mummy portraits found at Fayum in Roman Egypt (cat.46). The word icon (*eikon*) itself is derived from the Greek verb *εἰκνα*, which means to resemble. Early Christians gave this name to portraits of holy figures. In Byzantium, the term icon was used to describe images in such diverse media as painted wooden panels, wall paintings or the minor arts. Here we shall consider the most prevalent use of the term: an image painted on a portable wooden panel.

According to tradition, one of the first painters of icons was the Evangelist St Luke, who portrayed the Virgin Mary from the life.<sup>1</sup> The use of icons is more explicitly described in the seventh-century *Life of St Pankratios*, and in the texts of the Church Fathers, who considered icons to be a medium of communication with the divine; in the words of Basil the Great, 'The honour shown to the image is conveyed to its prototype.'

After the iconoclastic edict of Leo III (727), the cult of icons was forbidden and any representations of holy figures or scenes from their lives were banned. Icons and church decorations were destroyed. The iconophiles were persecuted and accused of idolatry. Under such circumstances, the Church Fathers and high-ranking monks formulated the Orthodox dogma for the cult of icons. Among them, John of Damascus (c. 675–c. 753/54; fig. 7) commented: 'An image is not always like its prototype in every way. For the image is one thing, and the thing depicted is another: one can always notice differences between them.'<sup>2</sup> This long period of dispute came to an end with the victory of the iconophiles, the so-called Triumph of Orthodoxy, in 843, under the reign of Empress Theodora and her son Michael III (cat. 57).

Today, Byzantine icons are to be found in important monasteries, such as St Catherine's on Mount Sinai (figs 36, 37) and those on Patmos and Mount Athos (fig. 40), in local collections and in the monasteries of Cyprus. Public collections of icons exist in the Byzantine museums of Athens, Thessaloniki, Kastoria and Veroia, and in the museums of Ohrid, Belgrade, Sofia, Moscow and St Petersburg, while many icons can be seen in the museums of Italy, Germany, France, Great Britain and America.

Icons from the period before iconoclasm have been preserved in the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, which was outside the area of the imperial iconoclastic edicts (some of these icons were brought to Kiev in 1845 and 1850, as gifts from the monastery to the archimandrite Porphyrij Uspenskij [cats 47, 313, 314]). Other icons are preserved in churches in Rome, such as the seventh-century Virgin at Santa Maria ad Martyres-Pantheon, Rome (cat. 47). Most – and the best of them – are painted in the encaustic technique, using hot wax to bind the pigments, a technique adopted from the funerary portraits of Late Antiquity. Others were painted with the egg tempera, which, after iconoclasm, became the standard technique for icon painting.

The use of icons after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843 and in the following centuries was gradually expanded in public and private. Outstanding works using precious materials, gold and enamel from Constantinople, such as the two icons of Archangel Michael in bust and in full length (cat. 58) that were taken to Venice by the Crusaders after the Sack of Constantinople in 1204, are now preserved in the Treasury of San Marco, Venice. Other examples were made of costly tesserae, imitating the art of mural mosaic, such as the early twelfth-century icons of the Virgin Pammakaristos and of St John the Baptist in the Patriarchate at Istanbul, and the

icons of Christ Pantokrator from the Bode Museum in Berlin and the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence (cat. 225). Particularly prized were micromosaic icons, such as the eleventh-century St Nicholas from Patmos, the twelfth-century St Stephen from Kiev (cat. 268), the Transfiguration from the Louvre, Paris (cat. 226), the early fourteenth-century diptych from Florence with the Dodekaorton (cat. 227), the Annunciation at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the St Theodore from the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (cat. 224). Major examples of the same period are kept in the monasteries of Mount Athos, such as St Anne and the Crucifixion at Vatopedi and St John the Theologian at the Lavra.

Another way of enhancing icons was to add gilded-silver revetments, such as those on the eleventh-century mosaic icon of St Nicholas from Patmos, and the fourteenth-century examples at Ohrid (cats 229.1–2, 230–232),<sup>3</sup> decorated in repoussé technique with a great variety of motifs, sometimes interlaced with sacred figures and scenes of the life of Christ and of the Virgin.



Such costly adornments commissioned by high-ranking believers were an important demonstration of devotion and in some cases they were designed as an integral part of an icon from the beginning.

Icons of the Virgin held an important place in devotion. In the Triumph of Orthodoxy (second half of the fourteenth century; cat. 57), the icon of the Virgin functions as the perfect image, whose veneration had been restored in 843, thanks to the imperial support of Empress Theodora, who is depicted with her son Michael III and flanked by famous iconophiles. Icons of the Virgin in various iconographic types abounded in the imperial palace and in the monasteries of Constantinople.<sup>4</sup> Among the most famous is the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria from the Monastery of the Hodegon, regarded as the 'palladium' of Constantinople, which was considered to provide the protection of the Virgin to the city whenever under attack. The Hamilton Psalter (cat. 177) shows this icon on a specially constructed *proskynetarion* (stand) beneath a large baldachin with protective

Fig. 36  
Christ, Sinai, sixth  
century. Wood panel,  
encaustic technique,  
84 × 45.4 cm

The Holy Monastery of  
St Catherine, Sinai

Fig. 37  
The Miracle of the  
Archangel Michael  
at Chonae, twelfth  
century. Wood  
panel, egg tempera,  
37.7 × 31.4 cm

The Holy Monastery of  
St Catherine, Sinai



Fig. 38  
The Virgin  
Hodegetria, the  
'Arakiotissa', twelfth  
century. Wood panel,  
egg tempera,  
103.5 × 73.5 cm

Byzantine Museum of the  
Archbishop Makarios III  
Foundation, Nicosia



railings; at either side, in smaller scale, devotees in lavish red garments kneel in prayer before it. The icon of the Virgin Blachernitissa, which was venerated in the apartments of the imperial palace of Blachernai, is known from written sources, while the icons of the Virgin Psychosostria (She who saves souls; cat. 232) and of Christ Psychosostes, most probably from the monastery of the same name in the Byzantine capital, were sent as a gift to Ohrid in the early fourteenth century.

Processions of the icon of the Virgin are depicted in wall paintings, such as those in the thirteenth-century Vlacherna church in Arta and in the Markov monastery (1376–81), where the icon is carried by 'he who bears the holy icon in litanies and official feasts'.<sup>5</sup> Panels painted on both sides were intended for processions of this kind, and examples are known from the late twelfth century, such as the double-sided icon

of the Virgin Hodegetria and of Christ, Man of Sorrows from Kastoria (cat. 246). The number of such works increased during the fourteenth century, and surviving examples include the double-sided icons of the Virgin and the Annunciation (cat. 230), of Christ and the Crucifixion from Ohrid, and of the Crucifixion and the Virgin Hodegetria from Thessaloniki, now in the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (fig. 39).<sup>6</sup>

The veneration of icons increased from the eleventh century, due to the transformation of the templon from a simple, low barrier separating the sanctuary from the nave to a higher screen adorned with successive registers of icons, the iconostasis. In the lowest register, between the columns, large icons (despotic icons) were placed, usually depicting the Virgin, Christ and the patronal saint of the church in a composition of the Deisis that finds its most appropriate place here.

Higher up, on the epistyle or architrave of the iconostasis, smaller icons depicting Apostles, saints and festival scenes were placed. Preserved in the Sinai monastery are early examples of epistyles on a single long beam, from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (cat. 317).<sup>7</sup> Other twelfth-century examples are also known from Athos, such as the Transfiguration, now in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (cat. 216), and the Raising of Lazarus, now in the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (cat. 215), both painted on a red ground from the same templon icons of the Monastery of Vatopedi. From the early fourteenth century epistyle icons with scenes of the Nativity, the Baptism, the Resurrection (Anastasis) and the Doubting of Thomas survive in Ohrid and Belgrade (cats 233–235).

Inside the church other icons of various dimensions were either placed on *proskynetaria*, in some cases on the feast day of the depicted

saint, or hung on the walls. The bema doors to the sanctuary are usually decorated with the Annunciation, as we know from a twelfth-century example in Cyprus,<sup>8</sup> which displays considerable affinity to the two icons of the same subject from Ohrid (cats 229.1, 229.2).

Smaller icons, diptychs, triptychs and polptychs were made for travellers or pilgrims for private devotion. One precious work of this kind, undoubtedly commissioned by a nobleman, is the early fourteenth-century mosaic diptych with the Dodekaorton from the Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence (cat. 227).

The style of icons followed, in general terms, the same artistic trends as mural painting and manuscript illumination, and the individual painter's skill in the treatment of the materials can be seen in the result. The early encaustic icons of Christ (fig. 36), of the Virgin and of St Peter in Sinai and in the icons of the Virgin and SS. Sergios and Bacchos, now in Kiev (cats 313, 314) bear witness to the high standards of the Constantinopolitan workshops in the sixth and seventh centuries.

After iconoclasm, during the Middle Byzantine period, the workshops of Constantinople produced icons of exquisite quality. Many are preserved in the Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai, such as the miniature-like, twelfth-century icon of the Heavenly Ladder of St John Klimakos (cat. 323) and those of flawless classical character, such as the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae (fig. 37),<sup>9</sup> as well as the late twelfth-century Annunciation (cat. 322) on a highly burnished gold ground, an outstanding example of the so-called manneristic trends of the Komnenian period. In other cases, during this period, the style of the icons is associated more closely with wall-painting workshops, such as the late twelfth-century despotic icons of the Virgin and of Christ from

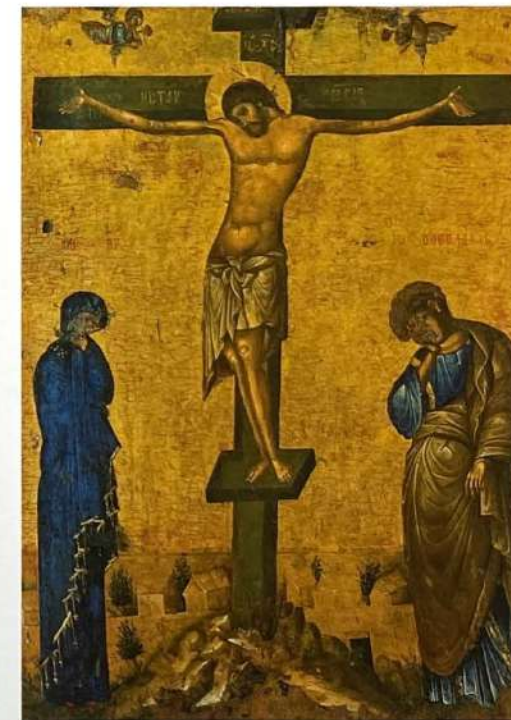
St Neophytos and from the Panagia tou Arakos at Lagoudera, Cyprus (fig. 38).<sup>10</sup>

After the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, important workshops, so-called Crusader workshops, emerged in the Eastern Mediterranean, in Sinai, Cyprus and Palestine, with distinctive technical and stylistic features presenting an original combination of the Byzantine tradition with practices of Western art.<sup>11</sup> In the same period, traits distinctive of other local workshops appear in icons of Kastoria and Veroia, painted with earth colours on a silver background and on roughly worked wood, such as the Prophet Elijah within the cave from Kastoria (cat. 242).<sup>12</sup>

With the recapture of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261, and throughout the last period of Byzantium, alongside the remarkable flourishing of wall-painting workshops, which left exceptional examples of their art in churches in the capital, Thessaloniki, Mount Athos, Ohrid and the wider region of Macedonia, icon painting also thrived. The icon with the imposing figure of St James

Fig. 39  
Crucifixion,  
Thessaloniki, with  
on the reverse the  
Virgin Hodegetria,  
fourteenth century.  
Wood panel, egg  
tempera, 103 × 84 cm

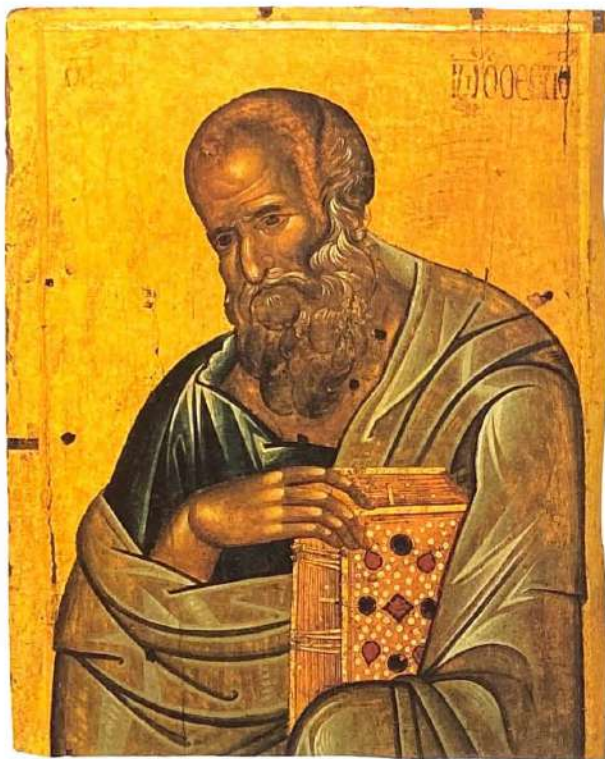
Byzantine and Christian  
Museum, Athens, 7. 169





from Patmos exemplifies the 'volume style' known from the frescoes of Sopoćani (1264). Icons such as the Virgin Psychosostria with the Annunciation on the reverse at Ohrid (cat.230), the Crucifixion from the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (fig.39) and the Christ Pantokrator (cat.241) and St John the Theologian of Mytilene (cat.240) are among the best examples of the art of the early and of the later Palaiologan era. During this period Mount Athos was established as the major centre for the sponsorship and collecting of icons. In the churches, chapels and treasuries of the monasteries a great number of the most important icons of this period are preserved. They were commissioned from the best workshops of Constantinople, and from the region of Thessaloniki, as can be seen in the late fourteenth-century series with the Apostles from a Deisis at Chilandar and Vatopedi (fig.40).<sup>19</sup>

Fig. 40  
St John the  
Theologian, from  
the Deisis, fourteenth  
century. Wood panel,  
egg tempera,  
119 x 94 cm  
Monastery of Vatopedi,  
Mount Athos



From the early fifteenth century, icon painting attests to the high cultural standards of the island of Crete, which had been under Venetian rule since 1204. The Cretan painter Angelos Akotantos, who is known from the will he drafted before embarking on a journey to Constantinople in 1436, created a refined individual style represented in a series of icons bearing the signature 'XEP ANGELOU' (the hand of Angelos).<sup>14</sup> In his work, Angelos re-establishes old subjects, such as the Virgin Kardiotissa (cat.239), and introduces new ones, such as St Phanourios, while enriching known iconographic types, such as St Theodore, with a number of Western elements (cat.238). Having assimilated the teachings of Palaiologan painting, he was the best representative of the Constantinopolitan tradition in the island, and became with his work the leader of the Cretan School, which flourished particularly during the second half of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.



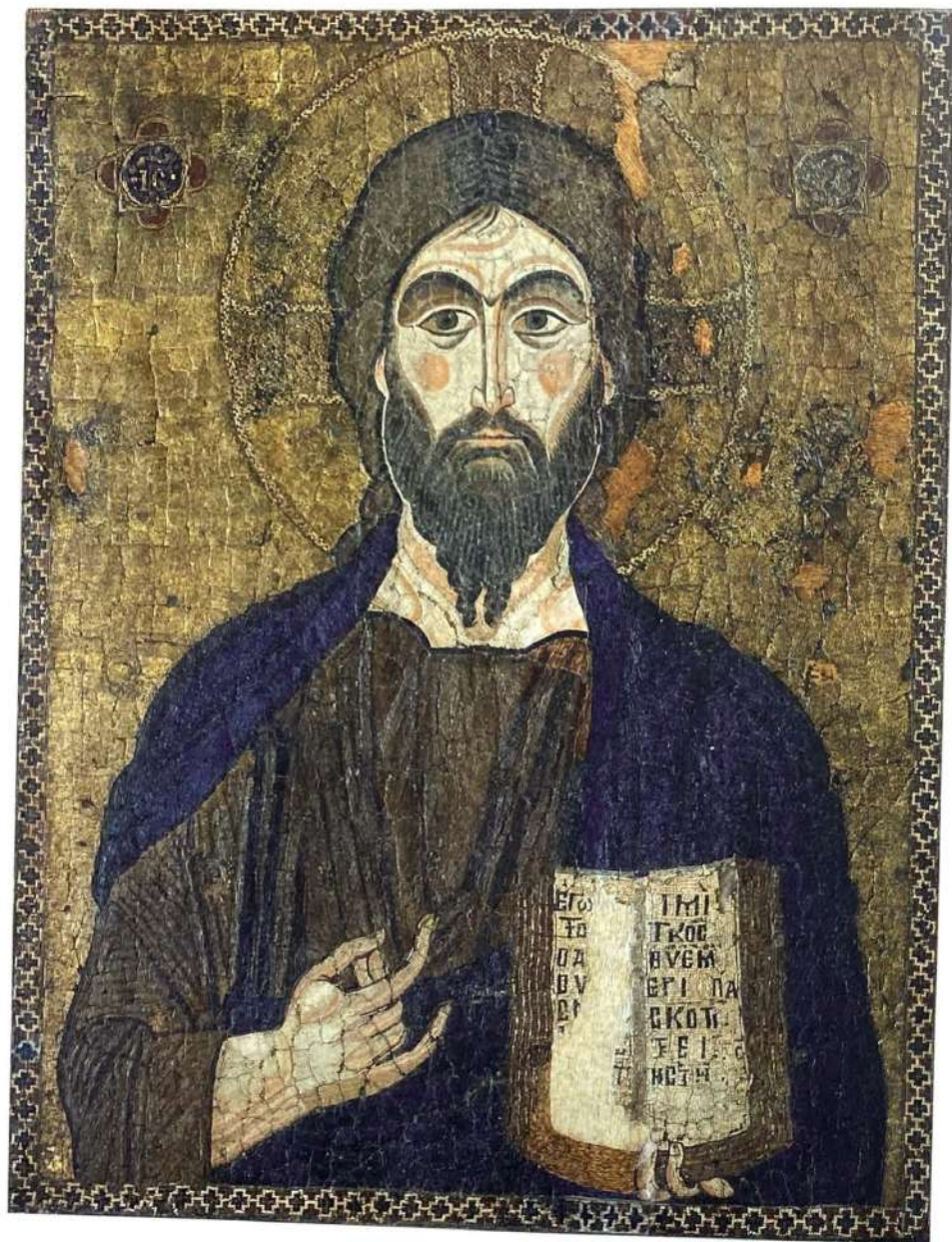
224

Micromosaic icon  
with St Theodore

Constantinople, early  
fourteenth century  
Wood, tesserae of marble, jasper,  
lapis lazuli, stone and gilded  
copper, wax, resin, 9 x 7.4 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg  
inv. no. 0029





225 ←  
Micromosaic with  
Christ Pantokrator  
Constantinople, 1150–75  
Mosaic on wood, 51 × 41 cm

*Seppia, collana e opere d'arte per il Polo Museale  
Internazionale, Museo Nazionale del Bargello,  
Firenze, n. 100, 1*

226 →  
Micromosaic with the  
Transfiguration

Constantinople, around 1200  
Tesserae of gilded copper,  
marble, lapis lazuli and glass,  
wax; originally on wood,  
transferred to slate in 1864 and  
restored (lower part of Christ's  
body, right hand side of his face)  
in patty and stucco, 52 × 35 cm

*Museo del Louvre, Paris, Département des  
Objets d'Art, ML 145*



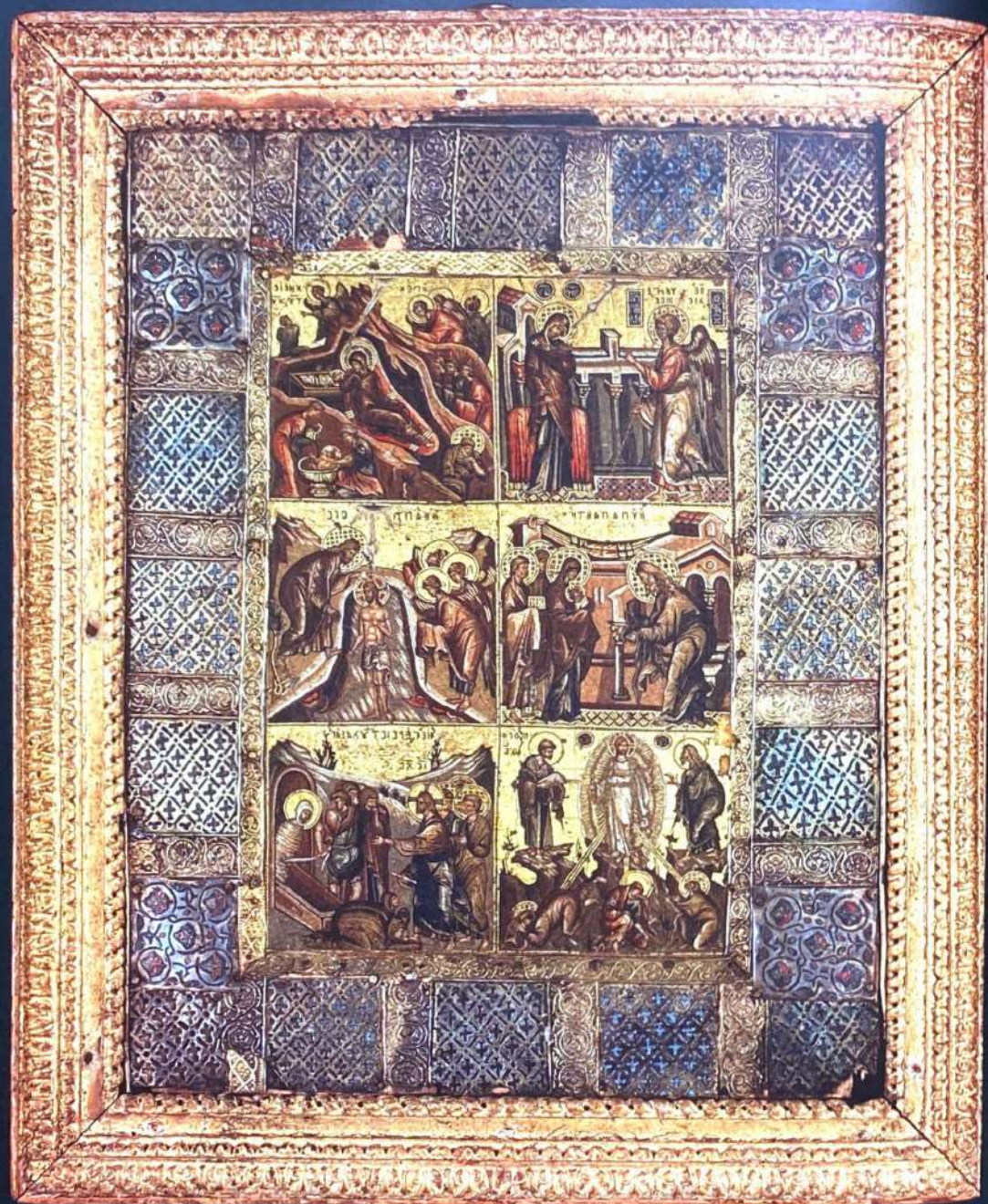
227 →  
Micromosaic diptych  
with festival scenes

Constantinople, early fourteenth  
century

Mosaic on wood panel with  
silver-gilt and enamel frame,  
each panel 27 × 17.7 cm

*Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore,  
Florence, 09/00230048-49*







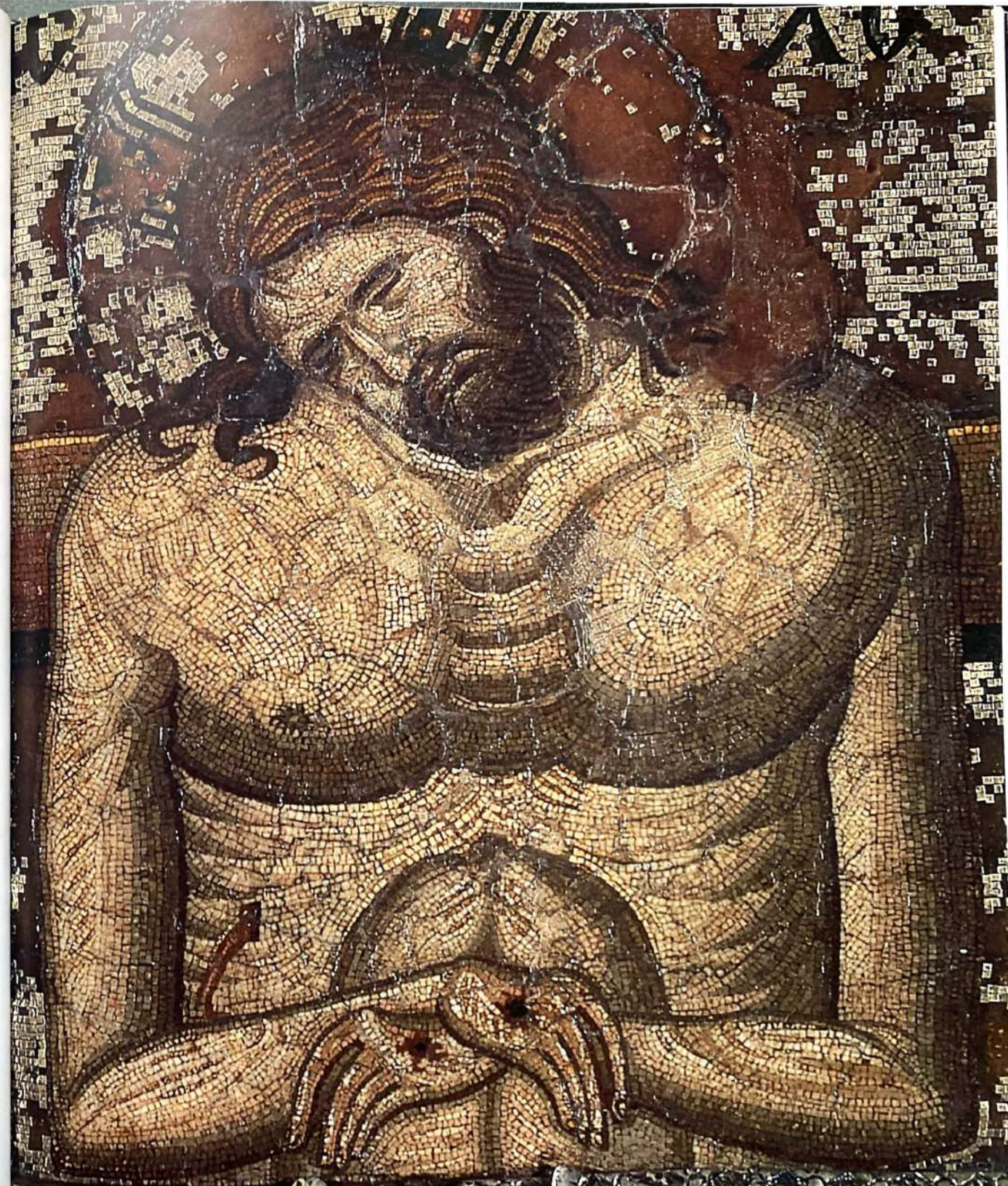


228

Micromosaic with the  
Man of Sorrows

Constantinople, around 1300  
Mosaic tesserae on wood;  
13 × 19 cm (without frame);  
23 × 28 cm (with frame);  
98.7 × 97.1 cm (case open)

Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome,  
inv. no. 89, Fondo Edificio di Culto, amministrato  
dal Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Centrale per  
l'Amministrazione del Fondo Edificio di Culto





229.1, 229.2

Pair of icons with  
the Annunciation

Constantinople, eleventh-  
late thirteenth century

Egg tempera, gold and enamel on  
wood, with silver gilt revetment,  
both panels 111 x 67.5 cm

Icon Gallery, Oxford, inv. nos 79 and 82







230

Two-sided icon with  
the Virgin Psychosostria  
(front) and the  
Annunciation (back)

Constantinople,  
early fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood,  
with silver-gilt revetment with  
enamel, 93 × 68 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 10



231

Icon with Christ

Thessaloniki or Ohrid, middle  
of fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood,  
with silver gilt revetment, 157.5 ×  
125 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 81



232

Icon with the Virgin  
Psychosostria

Thessaloniki or Ohrid, middle  
of fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood,  
with silver gilt revetment, 158 ×  
122 × 4 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 82





233 ✦  
Icon with the Baptism  
of Christ  
Ohrid, early fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood,  
44.5 × 36 cm  
Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 6

234 ↑  
Icon with the Anastasis  
Ohrid, early fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood,  
44 × 36.5 cm  
Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 5

235 ←  
Icon with the Doubting  
of Thomas  
Ohrid, early fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood,  
44 × 36 cm  
Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 7



236 ↗  
Two-sided icon with the  
Virgin Hodegetria and  
the Annunciation  
Thessaloniki (?), third quarter of  
the fourteenth century  
Tempera on wood (canvas),  
gilding, silver-gilt revetment, 99.5  
× 73 × 5 cm  
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2316



237 →  
ARTIST FROM MORAVIA  
Icon with St Demetrios  
End of the fourteenth century, or  
beginning of the fifteenth century,  
Hilandar (?)  
Tempera on board, 34.3 × 26.5 cm  
Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 1331







238 ←

ANGELOS AKOTANTOS  
(fl. c. 1425–50)

Icon with St Theodore

First half of the fifteenth century  
Egg tempera on wood, 122.8 × 70  
cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, 8330.  
Loventos Collection 15.205–1335

239 →

ANGELOS AKOTANTOS  
(fl. c. 1425–50)

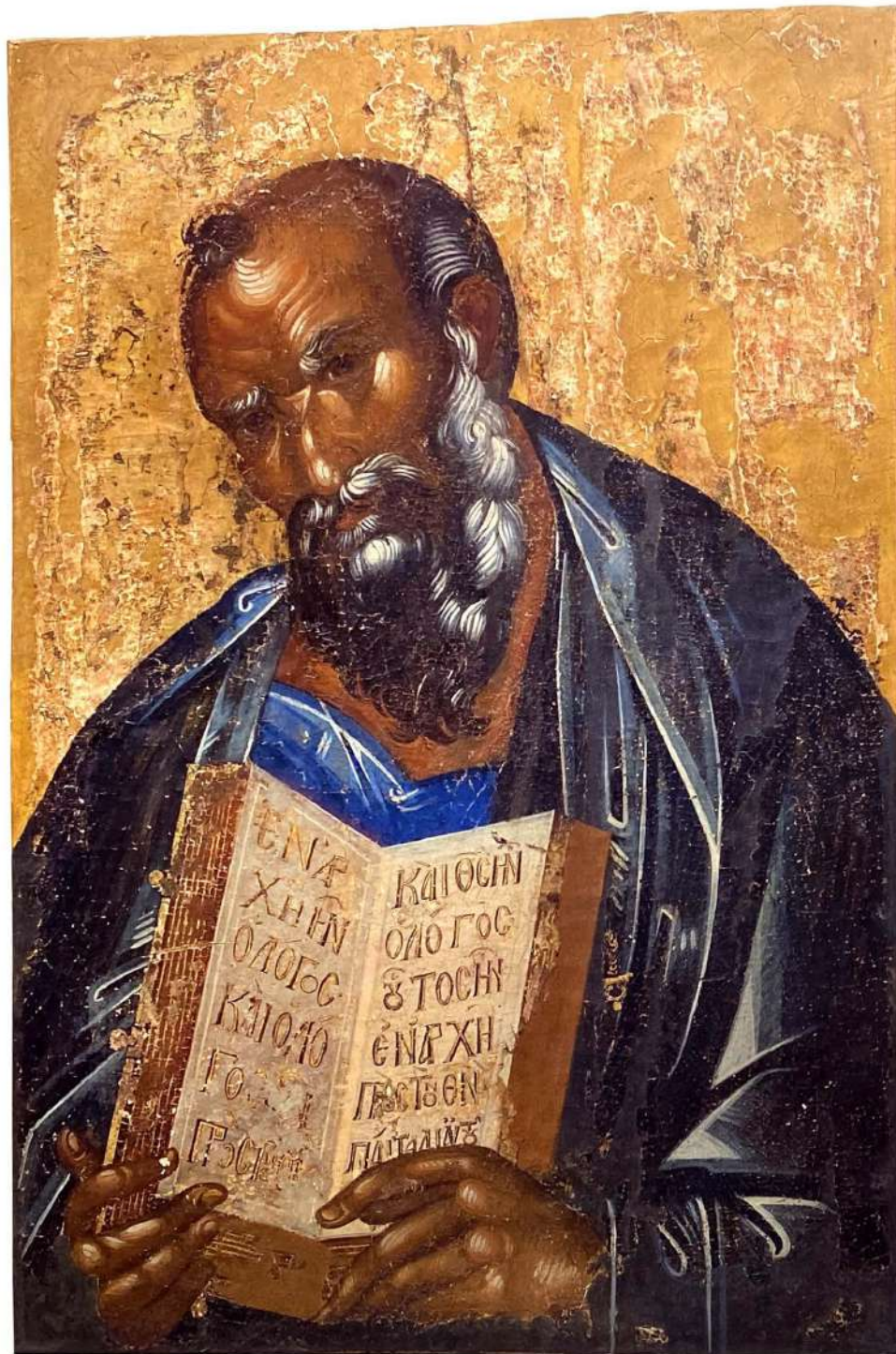
Icon with the Virgin  
Kardiotissa and Child

First half of fifteenth century  
Egg tempera on wood, 121 × 96.5  
cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and  
Christian Museum, Athens, 8332 (T. 1582)







240 →

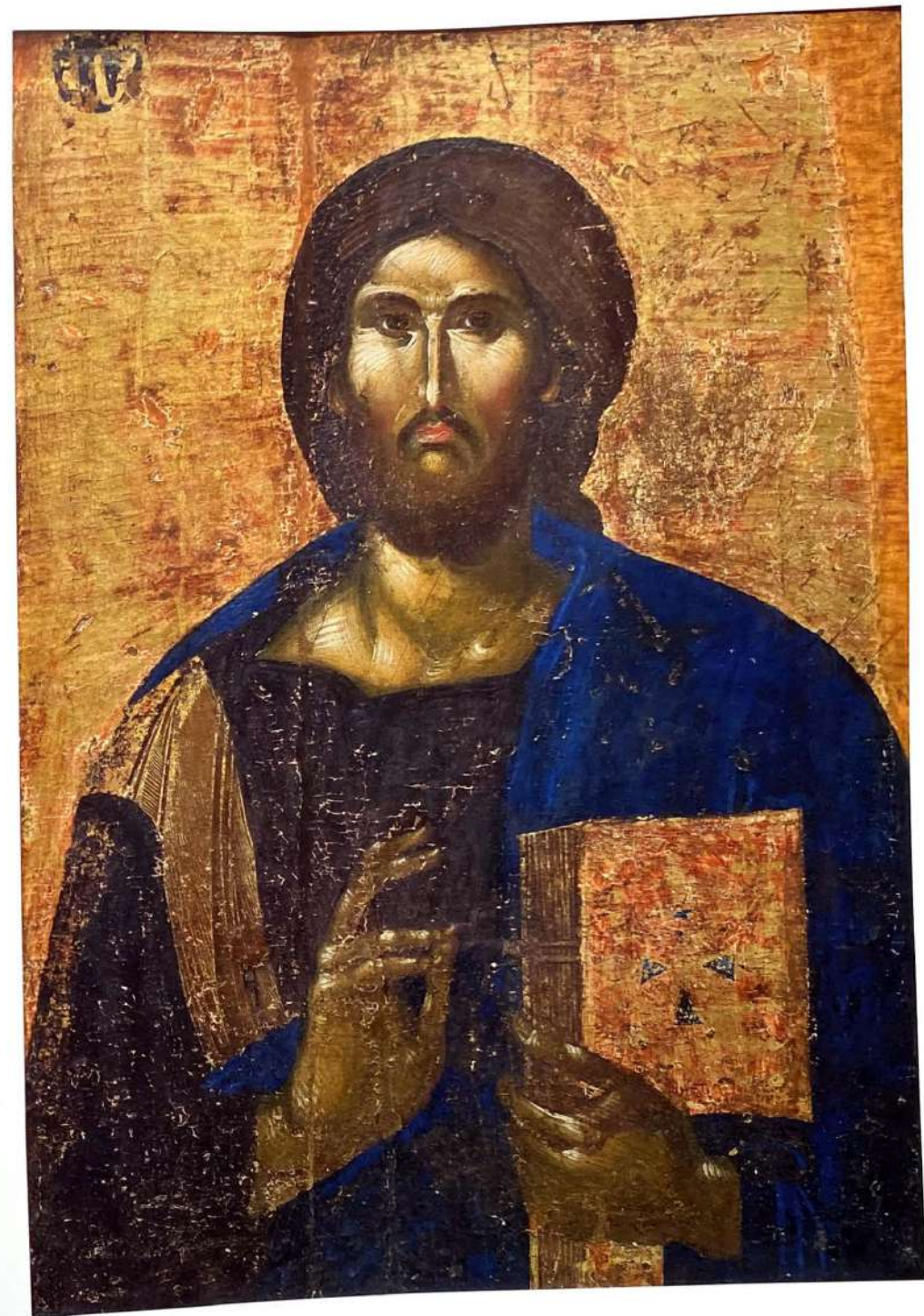
Icon of St John the Theologian

Constantinople or Thessaloniki,  
c. 1370–80  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on  
wood, primed with cloth and  
gesso, 107 × 69.5 cm  
Ecumenical and Byzantine Museum,  
Athens

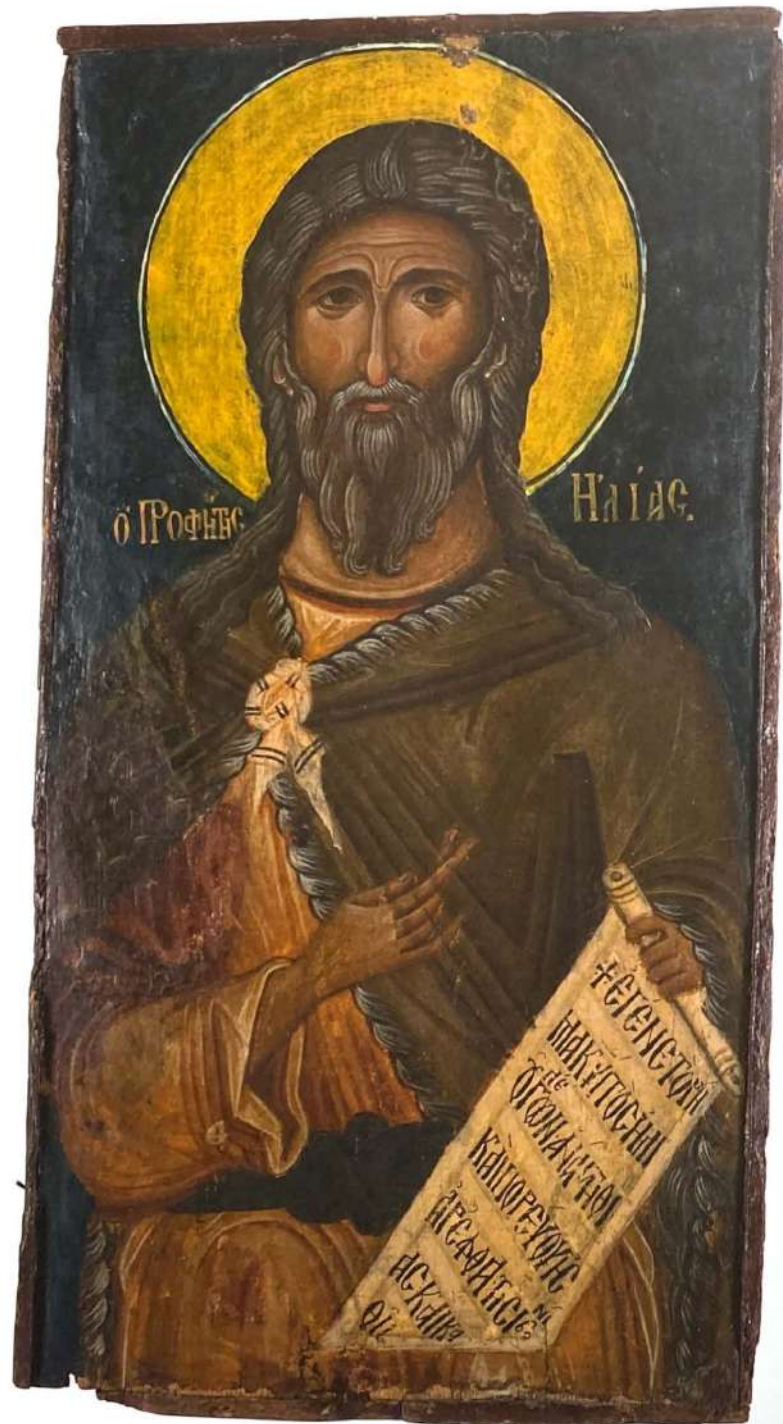
241 →

Icon of Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople or Thessaloniki,  
c. 1370–80  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on  
wood, primed with cloth and  
gesso, 107 × 69.5 cm  
Ecumenical and Byzantine Museum,  
Athens







242

The Prophet Elijah

1180–1200

Wood, 124 × 62.5 × 4.5 cm

Bezaudon Museum, Kanata, inv. no. 10472

243

Icon with the Koimesis  
of the Virgin

Constantinople,

early fifteenth century

Gesso on wood, gold leaf, egg  
tempera, 54 × 39 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Karolopoulos  
Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1.1.12







# 7

## Byzantium and the West

MICHELE BACCI



CONTACTS BETWEEN BYZANTIUM AND the medieval West occurred in all sorts of ways and at several levels. They are just one part of a wider web of cross-cultural convergences in the medieval Mediterranean. These included the dynamics of interaction within the culturally mixed societies of the Levant, the expansion of artistic knowledge through the movement of works of art along sea routes, the role played by ports and universally shared cult-places in the dissemination of forms and images, as well as the direct or indirect appropriation, imitation and refashioning of other people's artistic models for political, religious and economic purposes.

A major trend in this process was represented by the competition of Rome and Constantinople in their role as the important centres of Christian worship. As the apostolic and patriarchal see of Latin Christianity, Rome soon started working out its autonomous web of holy places associated with the worship of sites, relics and holy icons which aimed to evoke and refashion the aura of the most famous *loca sancta* of Palestine. The painted staurotheke of the Vatican Museums, made in Byzantium in the tenth century and preserved at least from the twelfth century onwards in the Lateran Sancta Sanctorum, is a good witness to this phenomenon (cat.244). In many respects, papal strategies for the promotion of Rome as the New Jerusalem were analogous and even alternative to those enacted in Constantinople, where the most famous collections of Christological and Marian relics were established, especially between the tenth and twelfth centuries; such a competition was strengthened after the emergence of the juridical and theological dissensions which lead to the schism of 1054 and the Fourth Crusade of 1202–04. In those centuries, the astounding amount of holy treasures preserved in the

Byzantine capital strongly contributed to the shaping of its aura and aroused public admiration even in the westernmost lands; Constantinople then became the goal for pilgrims from throughout Europe, and some authors even stated that it had been founded to prevent Saracens from desecrating the most precious relics of Asia and Africa.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of the Crusades many Eastern reliquaries were either bought or looted and entered into the treasures of Western cathedrals and monasteries: some of them were contemporary or slightly earlier works of art, such as the late fourteenth-century staurotheke presented in 1463 to the Venetian Scuola della Carità by the famous humanist Bessarion (1399/1400–72; see cat.253), whereas others were already very old objects, such as the early ninth-century nielloed reliquary of the True Cross (cat.52) which is deemed to have been owned by Pope Innocent IV (1253–54). In their new settings, such precious containers were usually left unaltered, though often conveniently enframed within Gothic monstrances.<sup>2</sup>

The desire for Byzantine reliquaries was enhanced by their material preciousness. Luxury goods of both profane and religious use, including manuscripts with sumptuous bindings, Islamic and Byzantine silks, Syrian and Egyptian glass and metalwork, as well as Italian, Greek, Arab and Chinese ceramics, were shared by international aristocratic milieux, regardless of their provenance; they were also included within church treasures, as shown by the extraordinary collection of precious objects in San Marco, Venice (cats 58, 62, 64, 80, 81, 176).<sup>3</sup> Westerners were also eager to appropriate more monumental church furnishings, such as brass doors (cat.265).

Icons were deemed to be the artistic genre more peculiar to Byzantine tradition: from the eleventh century onwards, Westerners started telling the stories of the most sacred images of

Christ and the Virgin worshipped in Constantinople, and became accustomed to using icons as visual counterparts to individual devotion. Their high reputation was stimulated not only by their ideal status as more or less direct copies of famous archetypes 'not painted by human hands' or made from life by such saints as the Evangelist Luke, but also by the compositional and iconographic features which made them efficacious portraits enabling communication between the devotees and their holy benefactors. One of the most recognisable characteristics of this kind of image was a half-figure presentation, as stated in the early twelfth century by the French theologian Hugh of St Victor.<sup>4</sup> One accurate imitation of this model is the early thirteenth-century Madonna signed by a certain '...nellus', now in the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa (cat.252).

The wave of Byzantinising painting in thirteenth-century Italy (the so-called *maniera greca*) was largely promoted by the involvement of icons in the religious practices of both individuals and groups, including the new mendicant orders. Eastern panels are thought to have been widely introduced into Italy in this period, although very few original icons (such as the Pisan *Madonna di sotto gli organi*; fig.41) are still extant. Italian towns which had direct connections with the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Pisa, Venice and Genoa, probably played a major role in the dissemination of this new type of religious image, which was rapidly adapted for new settings and functions: the small dossal made for a location on the altar table of the Pisan church of San Silvestro (cat.248) and including a Deisis at its centre was an abridged version of the iconographic programme associated with the horizontal icons decorating the epistyles of Byzantine sanctuary screens.<sup>5</sup>

New devotional trends, nourished by the mendicant orders in the Late Middle Ages, laid

emphasis on the Passion as the precondition of human salvation and favoured the making of images encouraging their beholders to feel remorse for their sins. Giunta Pisano, a painter known to have worked for both the Franciscan and Dominican orders, revitalised the Byzantine scheme of Christ dead on the Cross by visually stressing its painful aspects. A special image, that of the *Akra tapeinosis*, which showed the Saviour's dead body unnaturally lifted upwards and often associated with a sorrowful representation of the Virgin, was frequently repeated in the West and transformed into one of the most popular themes telling of individual and Eucharistic devotion, that later known as the *Imago pietatis*, *Vir dolorum* or Man of Sorrows (cats 246, 247.1–2).<sup>6</sup>

Besides iconographic schemes and functional models, Western artists also happened to imitate some technical and stylistic devices of their Byzantine colleagues. This proves to be especially true for painting, which was prized as the most distinctive 'Greek' art: for example, according to the twelfth-century *Treatise on Several Arts* by the German monk Theophilus, the Byzantines excelled in the use and combination of colours.<sup>7</sup> The impact of painting in its different media (book illuminations, murals, icons and mosaics)



Fig. 41  
*Madonna di sotto gli organi* (icon of the Virgin Dexiokratousa)  
c.1200. Tempera and gold leaf on wood,  
93 x 55 cm  
Cathedral of Santa Maria  
Assunta, Pisa

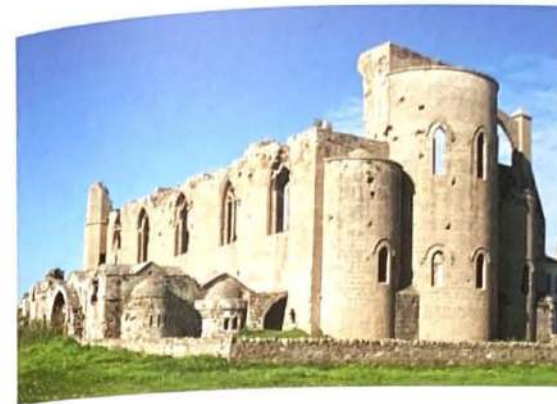


on the arts of the medieval West was much greater than that of architecture, sculpture or metalwork. Stylistic analysis shows that, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Latin painters made use of earlier and contemporary Byzantine formal devices in their quest for a more naturalistic rendering of the human body: implicitly, this practice shows that they looked at Byzantium as the heir to a long artistic tradition rooted in Roman and Early Christian Antiquity.<sup>8</sup>

But how did they become acquainted with Byzantine art? Besides the study of works of art preserved in the West, they could make use of collections of drawings, such as the rather puzzling Magdalen College Musterbuch of the late twelfth to early thirteenth century (cat. 264), or establish direct contacts with Greek painters, some of whom are known to have worked for Latin patrons either in the West (as Helias Spileotes, a book illuminator working in Cologne in 1021, did)<sup>9</sup> or in their homeland (see the bilingual Gospel-book of c.1300, cat. 261, made in Constantinople for a Western reader). The involvement of Byzantine masters was especially prized by those powers which, like Venice and Norman Sicily, had traditional connections with Constantinople and aimed to appropriate the apparatus and symbolic role of the Eastern empire, best conveyed by the splendour of mosaic decoration.<sup>10</sup>

It is not so easy to find examples of Western influence on Byzantine art. Nonetheless, interesting cases of fertile interaction are the adoption of painted initials in some Greek manuscripts of the ninth century, and the use of cloisonné enamels, probably borrowed from Carolingian practice.<sup>11</sup> In the Palaiologan period, the art of the metropolitan centres occasionally made use of Gothic ornamental features in monumental painting and sculpture, and appropriated translucent enamels for the decoration of liturgical vessels;<sup>12</sup> an Italianate mural made shortly before 1453 in the narthex of the Chora Monastery Church in Constantinople is an isolated testimony to the fascination with Early Renaissance style (fig. 42).<sup>13</sup>

In earlier times, there had been much more interaction in the Western borderlands of the Orthodox world, such as in South Italy (whose territories were largely included in the Byzantine Empire before the Norman conquest in the eleventh century)<sup>14</sup> and the Balkans (especially the Serbian kingdom),<sup>15</sup> where different styles were mixed together, such as Byzantine-type paintings with Romanesque and Gothic architectural patterns. In the wake of the Crusades, and especially after 1204, with the establishment of several Latin-ruled territories along the sea routes of the Eastern Mediterranean, cross-cultural connections were intensified. In the mixed societies of Acre,<sup>16</sup> Lebanon,<sup>17</sup> Cyprus,<sup>18</sup> Rhodes,<sup>19</sup> Athens,<sup>20</sup> Euboea,<sup>21</sup> Crete<sup>22</sup> and Constantinople itself (which was ruled by Latin emperors from 1204 to 1261),<sup>23</sup> Westerners imported their own habits and traditions, which were either simply juxtaposed or integrated or even mingled and synthesised with the art and style of the indigenous populations. Glazed pottery from late medieval Cyprus (cats 257, 258) suggests the blending of forms of different origins that is so typical of multicultural societies.



Whereas artistic synthesis, resulting from a long process of formal selection, was more natural for luxury goods and everyday objects, other considerations often prevailed in the field of religious art. With some exceptions (among them the fourteenth-century Italian murals in Rhodes and Famagusta),<sup>24</sup> the Greeks under Frankish rule tended to remain loyal to Byzantine tradition in the representation of saints and sacred events, as shown here by the detached fresco (cat. 255) with St Catherine in imperial garb from a chapel on Mount Penteli, dating back to 1233–34, when Attica was under Latin rule; this loyalty did not prevent them from adopting Western ornaments or architectural devices if these proved useful to enhance a church's sumptuousness, as is made clear by the fourteenth-century Gothic church of St George of the Greeks in Famagusta (fig. 43).<sup>25</sup>

Latin settlers, though making frequent use of Western models, especially in architecture, sculpture and book illumination,<sup>26</sup> also shared an interest in Byzantine pictorial tradition and often patronised Greek painters to decorate their churches, such as at Abu Ghosh and Bethlehem in twelfth-century Palestine<sup>27</sup> or in the fourteenth-century murals of the Arap Camii in Pera<sup>28</sup> and Our Lady of Carmel in Famagusta.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, they soon appropriated the Eastern Christian devotional use of icons and started sponsoring and

producing icon-like panels, most of them dating from the mid- to the second half of the thirteenth century: though preserved for the most part in the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, there is no general agreement as to their original place of production, whether in Acre or on Sinai itself, even if it is plausible that many of them were brought by pilgrims as ex-votos to the holy site. Be this as it may, the icons often display formal characteristics which point to the interaction with the artistic traditions of the different religious groups settled in the wider area of the Eastern Mediterranean. Eventually icon painting, represented by the mid-thirteenth century icon with St George on horseback (fig. 44), consisted of an original mixture of Byzantine, French, Italian, Armenian, Arab Christian and Islamic elements.<sup>30</sup>



Fig. 42  
Deceased Woman  
in the Presence of the  
Enthroned Virgin and  
Child (fragment),  
c.1453. Wall painting,  
131 × 170 cm

Chora Monastery  
(Kariye Camii), Istanbul

Fig. 43  
The metropolitan  
church of St George  
of the Greeks,  
Famagusta, second  
half of the fourteenth  
century

Fig. 44  
St George on Horseback,  
from Crusader  
Palestine, mid-  
thirteenth century.  
Egg tempera and gold  
leaf on pine panel,  
26.8 × 18.8 cm

British Museum, London







# 244 Reliquary of the True Cross

Constantinople, second half of the tenth century  
Tempera and gold on board,  
26 x 12.5 x 2.5 cm

*Yves de Meunier, *Yves de Meunier*, 1964, pp. 101-102*

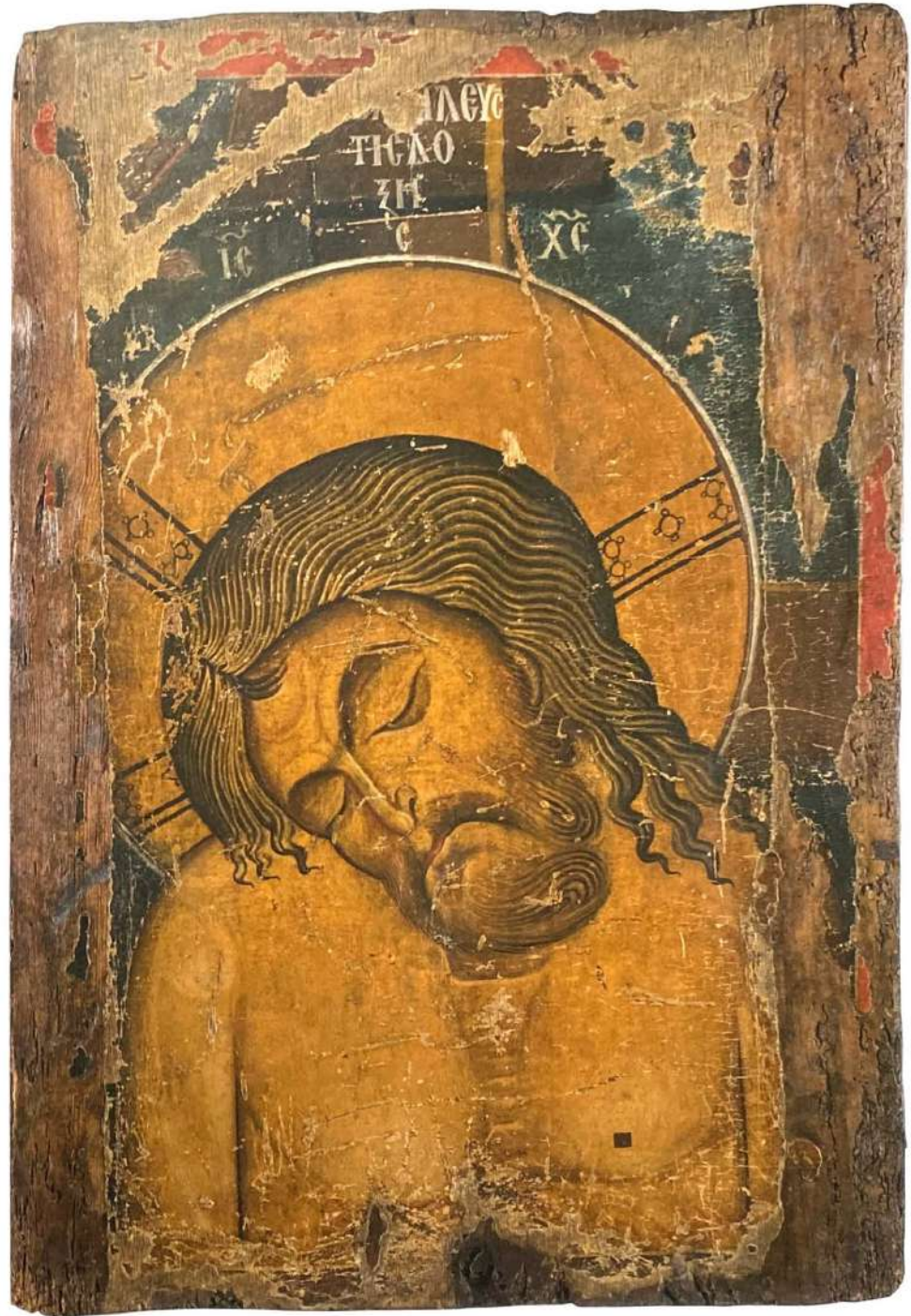
# 245 Reliquary of the True Cross

Constantinople, eleventh century  
(central plate); Rhine-Meuse, early  
thirteenth century (mount, reverse  
and lid) and sixteenth century  
corner angles; silver gilt, silver,  
copper, champlevé enamel, gem  
stones, wood (core), velvet, brown  
varnish (reverse); total height 30 cm  
(Byzantine plate: 13 x 10 cm)

*Museo de Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets  
d'Art, 1984*









247.1-2

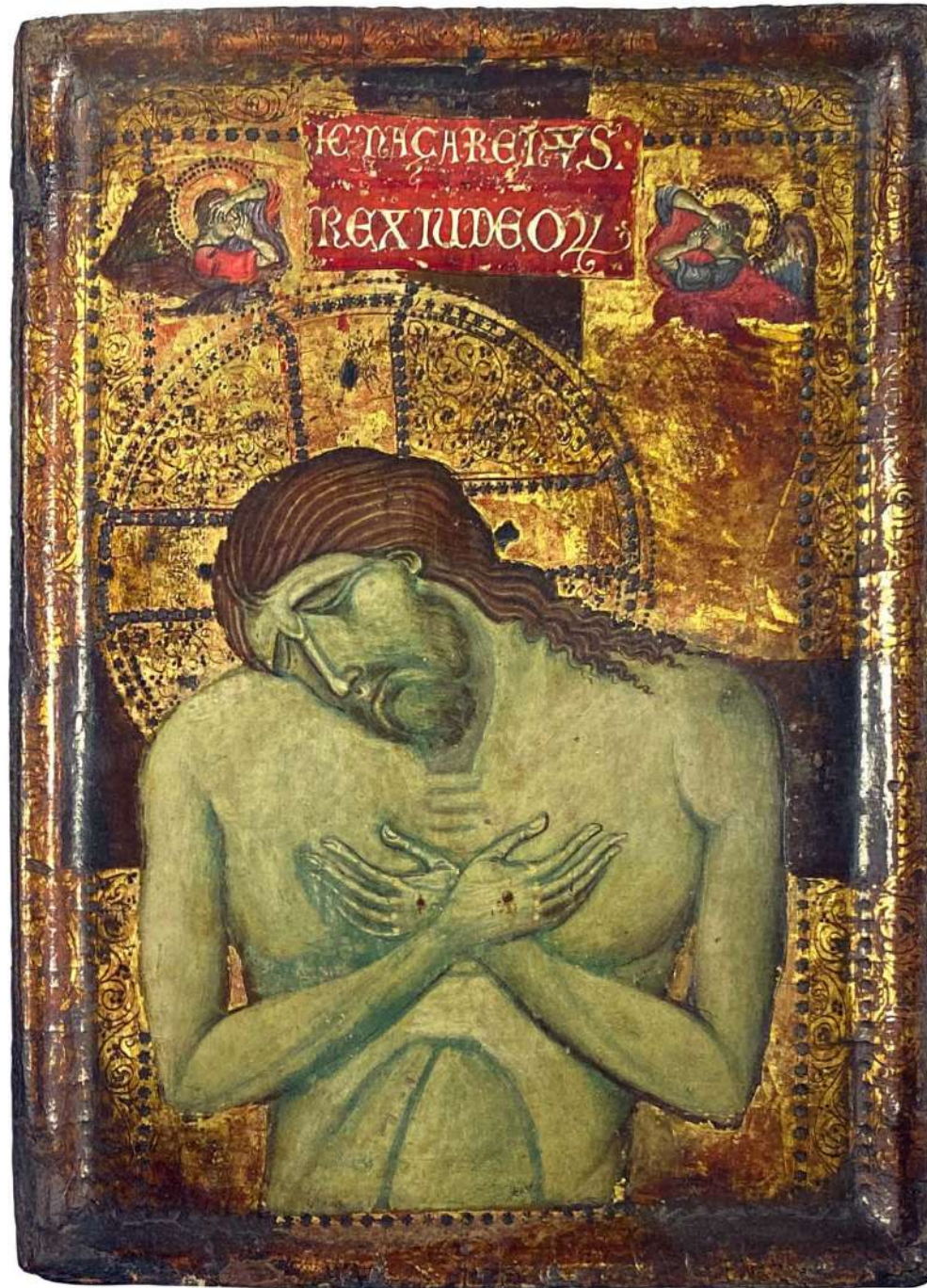
UMBRIAN ARTIST

*Diptych with the Virgin and Child and the Man of Sorrows*

c.1250-60

Egg tempera and gold on panel,  
left wing 32.2 x 22.8 cm; right wing  
32.4 x 22.8 cm

National Gallery, London, NG 1622 and NG 6523



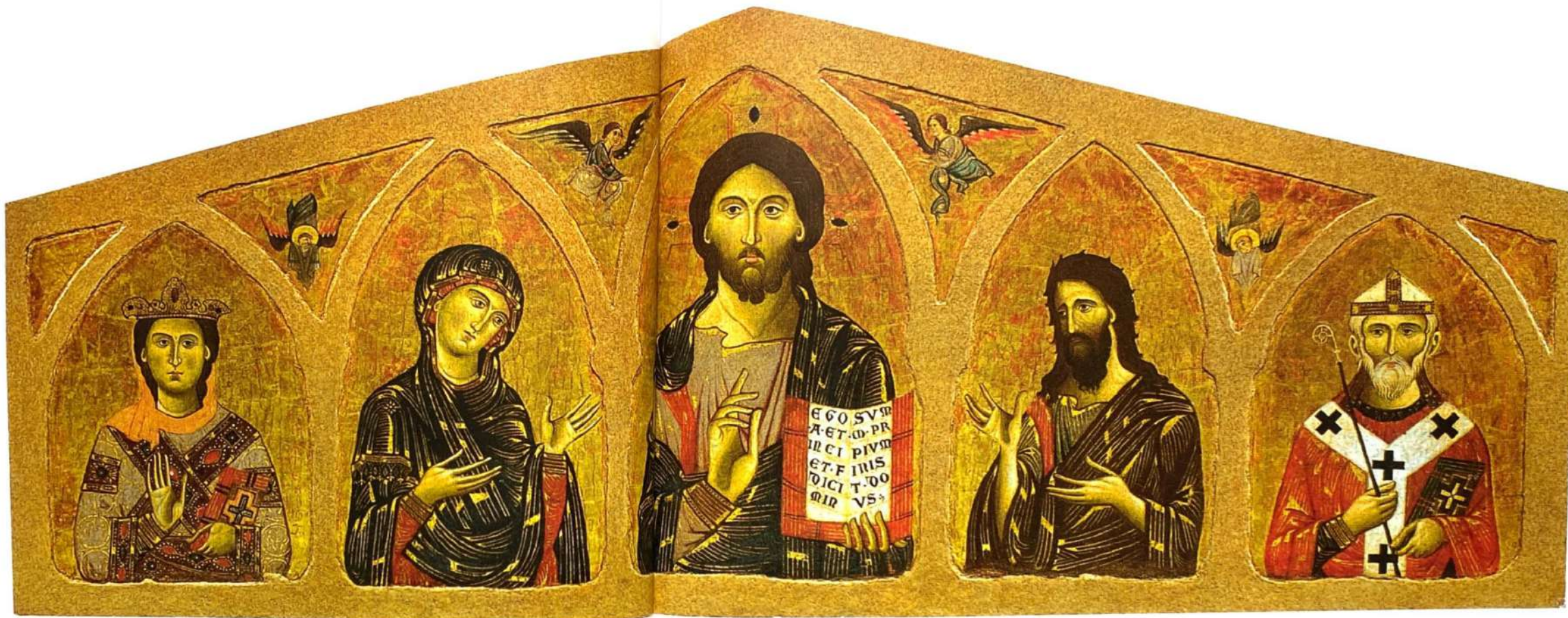


FRANCESCO DA PISA (?)  
(fl. 1298–1301)

Deisis with St Catherine  
of Alexandria and  
St Sylvester

Second half of thirteenth century  
Tempera and gold on poplar,  
87 × 217 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo,  
Pisa, inv. no. 1512





GIUNTA PISANO (fl. 1236–54)

Processional cross  
with Crucifixion on both  
sides

Thirteenth century  
Tempera and gold on poplar wood,  
113 × 83 cm

Musei Nazionali di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no.  
2325







250 \*

Triptych with Virgin  
and Child enthroned  
with angels and saints

Made in Italy, possibly at Rome,  
Naples or Siena, between c. 1335  
and c. 1340

Egg tempera with gold on gesso,  
canvas and wood, painted in red  
on verso, 39.7 × 27.0 cm (open)

*Pinacoteca Lazare, The Metropolitan Collection (the  
National Trust)*

251 →

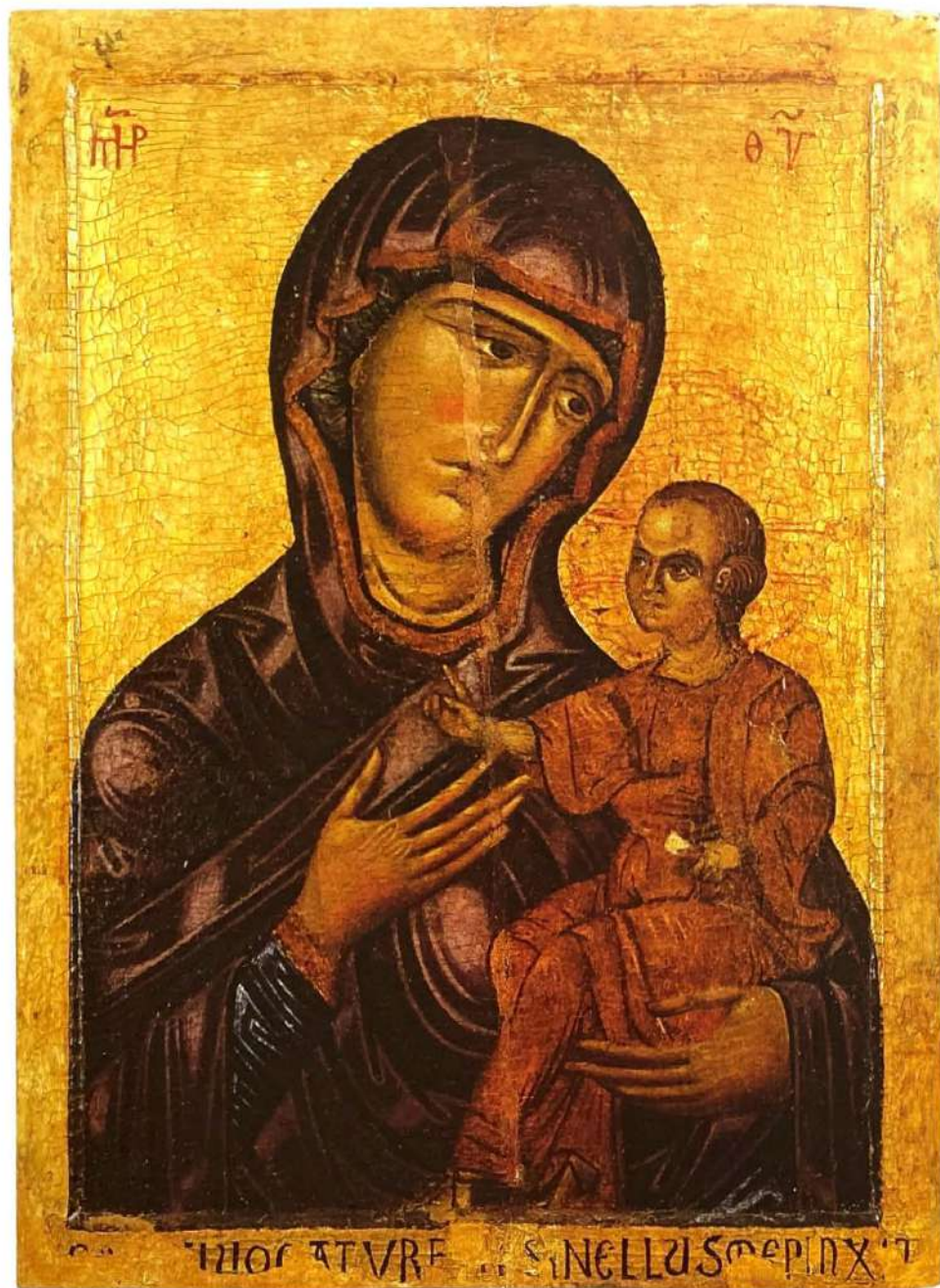
Icon with the Virgin  
and Child, Church  
Feasts and Saints

Venice (?), mid-fourteenth century  
Egg tempera on wood, stucco,  
gold glass, 42 × 30 × 1 cm

*Bosch Museum, Antwerp, inv. 1972*







252 ←

Icon with Virgin and Child

Mid-thirteenth century  
Tempera and gold on poplar,  
110.2 × 59.7 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Marco,  
Venice, inv. no. 125

253 →

GENTILE BELLINI (d. 1507)

Cardinal Bessarion and Two  
Members of the Scuola della  
Carità in Prayer with the  
Bessarion Reliquary

Venice, 1472–73  
Egg tempera with gold and silver  
on panel, 102.3 × 37.2 cm

National Gallery, London, NG 6991





254

Wall mosaic with  
head of an angel

Torcello, second half  
of eleventh century  
Mosaic, 31.6 × 24.6 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris  
Département des Objets d'Art, OA 6190



255 →

Wall painting with  
St Catherine

1233–34  
Detached fresco, 211 × 97 × 7 cm

The Hebrew Ministry of Culture, Beyrouth and  
Christian Museum, Athens, inv. 1063

256 ⇒

Funerary cloth with  
Othon de Grandon and  
the Virgin and Christ

Cyprus, last quarter of the  
thirteenth century  
Embroidered taffeta and silk, 88 ×  
328 cm

Historisches Museum, Bonn











257 ←←

Glazed bowl with a representation of a fish

Cyprus, Paphos region, first half of the thirteenth century  
Clay, lead-glaze, height 9.3 cm; diameter 17 cm; diameter of base 6.8 cm

Leventis Municipal Museum, Nicosia, inv. no. B/2003/0070

258 ←

Glazed bowl with a representation of a falconer

Cyprus, Lefkara region, early fifteenth century  
Clay, lead glaze, height 9.8 cm; diameter 13.8 cm; diameter of base 7.3 cm

Leventis Municipal Museum, Nicosia, inv. no. B/2003/0071



259 ←

Capital with angels

Thirteenth century  
Marble, 29.4 × 30.5 × 26.5 cm; diameter of base 21 cm

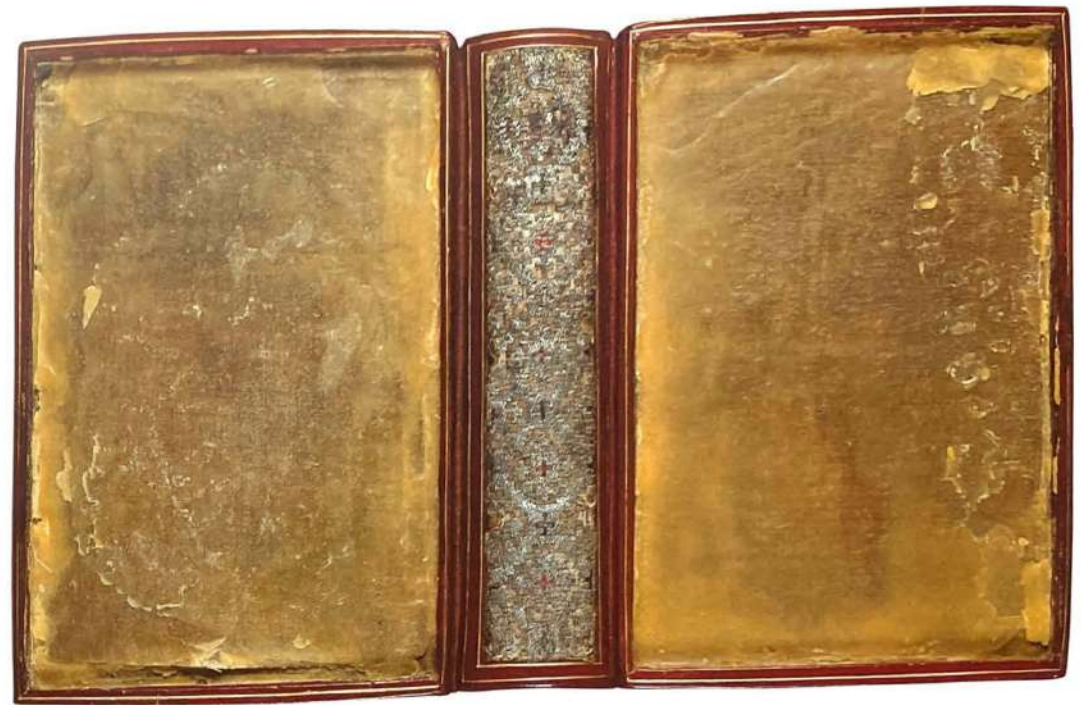
The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkos, inv. no. 0534

260 →

The Melisende Psalter covers

Jerusalem, c. 1131–43  
Ivory, 22 × 14.5 × 0.5 cm; silver and silk, 23 × 5.8 × 0.8 cm

The British Library, London, Egerton 1439











263 ←

Leaf from a model book,  
showing Christ and  
Zacchaeus, and St  
Theodore and St George

German artist (?), thirteenth  
century  
Silverpoint and sepia with red ink  
on vellum, 36 × 22 cm

Angewandte Kunst, Städtische Museen Freiburg,  
Freiburg im Breisgau, inv. no. G 27/14

264 →

Commentary on Genesis  
with drawing of Christ,  
folio 155v

Cyprus (?), c.1175–1225; fifteenth  
century

Paint on parchment, 33 × 54 cm

The President and Fellows of Magdalen College,  
Oxford, ms. 14.1







265  
 The doors of the Church  
 of San Salvatore de  
 Bireto, Atrani  
 1087  
 Brass, 333 x 184 cm  
 Church of San Salvatore in Bireto, Atrani







# 8

## Beyond Byzantium

ANTONY EASTMOND



IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TENTH CENTURY, the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos compiled a handbook, the *De Administrando Imperio* (*On the Administration of the Empire*), to guide his son and heir, Romanos II Diogenes, through the complexities of diplomacy with the many small states that surrounded the empire.<sup>1</sup> Through a succession of chapters which variously outline the history, people and rule of each of these states, their weaknesses and their potential threat to Byzantium, Constantine presented the empire to his son as the superpower of the Mediterranean and beyond; an empire at the hub of a network of client states, all of which could be controlled from Constantinople by playing each state off against the others, by exacerbating their internal weaknesses and by supporting their external foes. While the candidly manipulative picture of scheming and sometimes convoluted politics in the text seems to define the modern stereotype of the word 'Byzantine', the *De Administrando Imperio* also provides a characterisation of the empire that Constantine himself would have been happy to support: that of the centrality and dominance of Byzantium in all that happened in the *oikumene*, the word the Byzantines gave to the known, civilised world that surrounded them.

Byzantine art has often been seen at the heart of a similar cultural hub, dominating the art produced by its eastern Christian neighbours, from the Balkans in the west to the Caucasus in the east, from Russia in the north to Egypt, and even Nubia and Ethiopia, in the south. There is much evidence to support this view of the centrality of Byzantine art in the Eastern Mediterranean. Developments within the empire influenced the style, the iconography and even the functions of the art subsequently produced in all these regions. The magnificent splendour of imperial art – silk robes flecked with gold, palaces with silver mechanical automata and

mosaics showing great military victories – acted as archetypes for the display of power for other rulers to imitate. Byzantine religious art – painted and mosaic churches, icons, manuscripts and metalwork – similarly provided ways to visualise the complex theological and spiritual ideas of Christianity. Looking from Constantinople to the world beyond Byzantium emphasises the shared characteristics of the art produced by Christians in the Eastern Mediterranean, based on a common Byzantine iconography for the life of Christ. But it does so at the expense of looking only through Byzantine eyes. The view from within those neighbouring cultures was often very different: for them Byzantium was just one cultural model, albeit an important one politically, ecclesiastically and historically. They could also look elsewhere to the other major powers of the Eastern Mediterranean, notably the Islamic dynasties of Iran, the Levant and North Africa, which offered rival means to display power and wealth, and gave access to different cultural and visual traditions than the Greco-Roman inheritance of Byzantium. These states also had their own indigenous traditions, and many had Christian histories as long and illustrious as those of Byzantium itself, which continued to influence the art that they produced. The view from outside Byzantium presents a different picture of the empire from that produced by looking out from within. It is possible to discern a variety of responses to Byzantine culture: imitation, emulation, adaptation on the one hand, but also transformation and even rejection on the other. The changing value and status of Byzantine art abroad is, of course, linked to the empire's political and military strength, but not always in as direct or obvious a way as might be assumed.

Constantine VII compiled his handbook at a time of expansion in the empire, and in its aftermath the influence of Byzantine art abroad

can be seen at its strongest. Between 950 and 1050 the borders of the empire grew in all directions: to the east, after the army of John Tzimiskes (969–76) had recaptured parts of Mesopotamia, Basil II forced Georgia to cede its south-western provinces of Tao-Klarjeti to the empire in campaigns in 1001 and 1021, and in between he fought on the western frontier of his empire to reconquer Bulgaria, which had flourished in the ninth and tenth centuries as an independent empire. Within a generation of Basil's death, the Armenian kingdoms of Vaspurakan, Kars and Ani had been annexed to the empire, its kings killed or pensioned off to estates in Cappadocia. At that point Byzantium covered its greatest territorial extent since the reign of Justinian.

The evidence from the Balkans in this period supports this picture of Byzantine dominance, both military and cultural. The Bulgars had been converted to Christianity in the 870s thanks to the work of the missionaries Constantine (better known by his religious name of Cyril) and Methodios, who had devised a new alphabet, Glagolitic (a precursor of Cyrillic), for their Slavic translation of the liturgy. This was not only part of the general evangelising mission of Christianity, but also a ploy of foreign policy, to draw Bulgaria into the Byzantine sphere of influence, and away from that of Rome or Germany. As well as following Byzantine liturgy, the Bulgars also adopted Byzantine art to accompany it. Little survives from this early period, but the excavations of the round church in the new Bulgarian capital of Great Preslav, for example, suggest that it had been modelled on the Church of the Prophet Elijah, one of the imperial chapels built within the Great Palace in Constantinople by Basil I (867–86).<sup>2</sup>

The people of Kievan Rus' too were converted to Christianity at this time, and there as well the role of art as a diplomatic tool can be

seen. The Russian primary chronicle records that the decisive factor in the decision to convert was art: an embassy sent to Constantinople was deeply impressed by the enormity and splendour of St Sophia, which demonstrated the overwhelming and all-encompassing power of Christ, as well as that of the Byzantine emperor, God's vice-regent on earth.<sup>3</sup> Over the following century emperors sent gifts of artists and materials to Kiev to help design and decorate the city's new churches. Kiev had been laid out in imitation of Constantinople with its own Golden Gate, and emperors provided the mosaists to decorate the city's own version of St Sophia in the 1030s. The mosaics in the Church of the Archangel Michael (c.1108–13) show the tradition continuing into the twelfth century (cat.268). As a region which had never come within the Roman Empire, it showed the ease with which Byzantine artistic traditions could be accepted.

Among the Christians of the Caucasus, Egypt and the Near East, Byzantium could not play so

Fig. 45  
Portrait of Gagik-Abas  
of Kars, with his wife  
and daughter, c.1050.  
Manuscript.  
Jerusalem, St James  
2536, fol.135bis





decisive a role. All these regions had indigenous Christian traditions going back to the fourth century and earlier; indeed, Armenians claimed to have a Christian state that predated the conversion of Constantine the Great.<sup>4</sup> These states were also much closer to the Iranian world, which had its own visual traditions, particularly for the display of power, that could be traced back to the fifth century BC. The Caucasus, in particular, lay on the fault line between the Greco-Roman and Iranian worlds, and the people there looked east as often as west for their visual language. When the Armenian monarchy was revived in 884, its first king, Ashot I Bagratuni (884–90), turned to the Abbasid Muslim Caliphate for his crown and investiture robes before seeking the same recognition from Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> A fragmentary manuscript of the last ruler of the Armenian city of Kars, Gagik-Abas (1029–64), shows him seated cross-legged on a carpeted dais with his wife and daughter, all wearing elaborate silk robes woven with lions and elephants (fig. 45). It is an image that owes everything to the Muslim world,<sup>6</sup> and was perhaps a deliberate riposte to Byzantium, which was on the verge of annexing his kingdom.

At the same time, the patriarch-catholicos of neighbouring Georgia, Melkisedek (1010–29), travelled twice to Constantinople to seek gifts from Basil II and Constantine VIII (1025–28), receiving ‘silver, church ornaments, icons, crosses, and vestments for prelates and priests’.<sup>7</sup> His access to the capital built on a formidable new network of links between Georgia and Byzantium which had been spurred by the Byzantine takeover of Georgia’s south-western provinces and by the creation of a Georgian monastery, Iviron, on Mount Athos (founded in 980).<sup>8</sup> This became a centre for translations from Greek into Georgian of major Greek theological and liturgical texts, which led the Georgian Church to adopt Byzantine liturgical practices,

rather than the older Jerusalem rites, on which it had relied in the past. However, this Byzantinising tendency was tempered by a continued interest in particular local artistic forms, notably Georgians’ delight in repoussé metalwork, whether on icons or pre-altar crosses, which have no counterpart in Byzantine art or liturgy (fig. 46).

This difference in attitude towards Byzantium between the countries of the Caucasus partly reflects their geographical locations, partly the religious divide between them. Georgia was in communion with the Byzantine Church, but Armenia was not. It, like the Syriac and Coptic churches in Syria and Egypt, had never approved the canons of the fourth ecumenical council of 451, and so belonged to a distinct religious world. This meant that these churches had less interest in looking to Constantinople for liturgical or theological innovations. Despite this, many Armenians worked within the empire, often attaining high ranks at court, and in 989 it was an Armenian builder, Trdat, best known for building the cathedral in the Armenian capital of Ani, who rebuilt the earthquake-damaged dome of St Sophia, after ‘many skilful workers among the Greeks [had] tried repeatedly to reconstruct it’.<sup>9</sup>

The example of Armenia, in which the general iconographic influence of Byzantine art is balanced by Iranian and local stylistic developments, reveals clearly the ambivalent light in which Byzantium was regarded by its neighbours. In the centuries that followed, Byzantium’s other neighbours were also to adopt a more nuanced acceptance of the Byzantine core that linked them all, as their local religious traditions and regional political statuses grew stronger. This was accentuated by the gradual decline of Byzantine military and diplomatic power in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries,

marked most clearly by the gradual loss of the Anatolian plateau to arriving Seljuq and Turcoman tribes, and then, in 1204, by the Fall of Constantinople itself to the forces of the Fourth Crusade. This attempt from western Europe to recapture Jerusalem had been diverted away from its original goal by the Venetians in control of the fleet on which they sailed, and led to 57 years of Greek exile from their capital. It allowed rulers, who in previous centuries would have accepted inferior court titles which placed them within the Byzantine world hierarchy, now to adopt the full panoply of imperial titles and regalia for themselves.

A second empire rising in Bulgaria under Peter and Ivan Asen in the 1180s soon set its sights upon Constantinople itself, and the brothers rallied support by using Byzantine art against the empire. They proclaimed that a miraculous icon of St Demetrios found at their new capital, Veliko Trnovo, demonstrated the Byzantine saint’s change of allegiance to Bulgaria from his main cult site, Thessaloniki, Byzantium’s second city.<sup>10</sup> Even after the failure

of their attempt to capture Constantinople, Bulgaria’s rulers continued to proclaim themselves as universal emperors in their art (cat. 287).

Alongside Bulgaria, Serbia also rose to prominence in the thirteenth century. The founder of its ruling dynasty, Stefan Nemanja, had been paraded in chains through Constantinople after a defeat by Emperor Manuel I Komnenos in 1172, but was able to return to Serbia to establish it as a viable and powerful state.<sup>11</sup> He was even able to retire as a monk to the monastery of Hilandar, which he had founded on Mount Athos, taking the name Simeon. His son, Stefan the First Crowned, had himself acknowledged as king, and translated his father’s body back to Serbian soil to be buried as a saint in the monastery of Studenica. This then became the centre of a dynastic cult, to which all later Serbian rulers could turn for legitimacy. The cycles that were developed to show the life and death of St Stefan-Simeon adopted a Byzantine style, but their interest in the use of a holy body as a focus for a new state ideology

Fig. 46  
Pre-altar cross in  
the church of SS.  
Kvirike and Ivlita at  
Lagurka, Svaneti,  
Georgia, 1111 and later



Fig. 47  
The Death of Anna  
Dandolo, c. 1260. Wall  
painting. Narthex  
of Sopoćani, Serbia







Fig. 48  
Dish with the  
Ascension of  
Alexander the Great,  
made for the Artuqid ruler  
Rukn ad-Daula abu Sulayman Da'ud,  
1114–44. Copper gilt  
with enamel, diameter  
26.5 cm

Tinler Landmuseum,  
Ferdinandum, Innsbruck,  
Austria

Fig. 49  
Headpiece from the  
Reading for the Feast  
of the Annunciation  
showing Christ  
Emmanuel, from the  
Lectionary of Hetum II,  
1286.

Matenadaran, Armenia, no. 979,  
folio 297r

owes much more to Western, especially Venetian, art.<sup>12</sup> The paintings at Sopoćani (c. 1260) demonstrate the presumption of the new dynasty. In one image, which is directly modelled on images of the Koimesis (the falling asleep of the Virgin), Anna Dandolo, the Venetian wife of Stefan the First Crowned, takes the place of the Mother of God, and her son, King Stefan Uroš (the patron of the monastery) that of Christ (fig. 47).

The fracturing of Byzantine hegemony in the Balkans was repeated in the east, where Byzantine power was gradually replaced by that of the Seljuq Turks. At the end of the twelfth century, Georgia enjoyed a brief period when it exploited the decline of Byzantine power and a short hiatus among the Seljuqs to expand its territory, taking over much of Armenia. The series of great churches that were constructed at



this time, such as Timotesubani, probably built by the leader of the Georgian army that helped establish Trebizond as a separate Greek empire after 1204, contain many Byzantine elements, but its vision of the overall order of the cosmos, as represented by the hierarchy of saints and prophets in its paintings, places the ascension of the Cross at its summit, rather than Christ.<sup>13</sup> This was a central theme in Georgia since the conversion of the country in the fourth century, which had been marked by the erection of three monumental crosses.

Nevertheless, the growing power of Muslim states in the region is increasingly reflected in art. The Innsbruck dish, made for the Artuqid ruler Rukn ad-Daula abu Sulayman Da'ud in the early twelfth century (fig. 48), and sometimes linked to Georgia, reveals the complex web of Byzantine, eastern Anatolian and Islamic motifs that were combined to appeal to this ruler in south-eastern Turkey.<sup>14</sup> A similar intermixing of motifs is evident in Armenian art from this point as



Fig. 50  
The Annunciation  
and a polo match,  
on a basin made for  
Sultan al-Malik al-  
Salih Najm al-Din  
Ayyub, c. 1247–49.  
Brass inlaid with  
silver, diameter 50 cm

Ever Gallery of Art,  
Washington DC, 55.10



well. Armenian craftsmen were involved in the building of many Seljuq buildings, including mosques and medreses, and their work is evident in both their construction techniques and the decorative motifs that they employ. At the same time Armenian religious architecture began to adopt much of the decorative vocabulary of Seljuq buildings, notably their emphasis on portals with geometric interlace designs.<sup>15</sup> This evidence of cultural exchange contradicts the picture of religious war and intolerance that most chronicles portray; but it can be supported by our knowledge of the extensive trade links across Anatolia. The movement of goods along the Silk Road did much more to unite the peoples east of Byzantium than wars did to divide them. In Cilicia, at the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean, a new Armenian kingdom grew in the thirteenth century which came to syncretise an even broader range of cultures into its art. Armenian Cilician art is now best known

for its manuscripts, many of which name their artists, such as T'oros Roslin (fl. 1256–68). These works show how they synthesised not only Byzantine and Islamic elements into their art, but also Western ideas introduced through the neighbouring Crusader states, such as the Franciscan Madonna of Misericordia on the Feron-Stoclet leaf from the Marshal Oshin Gospels of 1274 (cats 297, 298), and even Chinese elements, such as the dragons and lions in a lectionary manuscript of 1286 (fig. 49). These motifs had travelled west with the Mongols, and were encountered by the Armenians who, with the Franciscans, tried unsuccessfully to convert the Mongols to Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

For the Syrians and Copts, who lived permanently under Muslim rule, it is perhaps not so surprising to find strong Islamic influences in the figure style of the art that they produced. However, a less expected result is the inclusion



of Christian imagery in art made for local Muslim rulers, such as the scenes from the life of Christ that appear on a basin (fig. 50) commissioned by the Ayyubid Sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub (1239–49).

The revived empire in Constantinople after 1261 never had the same political or military power as its predecessors, and its emperors could no longer use the Church as an instrument of foreign policy in the same way that they had before. This, paradoxically, allowed churches outside the empire to renew their interest in Byzantine art, which no longer had the diplomatic, almost colonial connotations of previous centuries. In the fourteenth century, a time when any Byzantine aspirations for international power were little more than fantasies, Byzantine art itself was resurgent. The doors from the al-Mu'allafa church in Cairo (cat. 307) show a renewed interest in Byzantine iconography, combining them with Mamluk elements. The angular style that predominated under the Palaiologan emperors was widely disseminated and imitated, especially in the Balkans and Georgia. Once more Byzantine artists were in demand abroad. For instance, Theophanes the Greek (Feofan Grek)

Fig. 51  
Feofan Grek, *Sr Makarios*, 1378. Wall painting. Church of the Transfiguration, Novgorod



worked in Novgorod and Moscow at the end of the fourteenth century (fig. 51) and became the mentor of Andrei Rublev, the most famous Russian icon painter of the fifteenth century.<sup>17</sup> While his work continued the Byzantine tradition, it can equally be seen as the beginnings of a distinct new Russian idiom. However, the functions for which this art was used were entirely born of Byzantine origins: the late fifteenth-century embroidery showing a processional icon includes identifiable Muscovites, but the central figure holding the icon is re-enacting an eleventh-century Constantinopolitan practice (cat. 266).<sup>18</sup>

In the final decades before the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the empire was politically just a faint shadow of what it had been 400 years earlier, yet its artistic presence beyond Byzantium remained formidable. It was no longer in a position to export its art wholesale as it had in the tenth century, and there was less homogeneity between the art of all the neighbouring states, which now had well-established indigenous artistic traditions. Nevertheless, their deep debt to Byzantine art remains evident.

## 266

Embroidered icon with the miracle of the Hodegetria

Moscow (?), 1498 (?)  
Taffeta and damask, embroidered with gold and silver threads,  
95.1 × 98 cm

State Historical Museum, Moscow  
(05455 delch/R.B.-5)





267 \*

Embroidered image  
of St George

Moldavia, 1700  
Gold, silver and silk threads on  
red silk, transferred to red velvet.  
125 × 97 cm

National History Museum of Romania,  
Bucharest inv. 25062

268 →

Mosaic panel of  
St Stephen

c.1100–13  
Mosaic, gold, glass and  
stone tesserae on plaster.  
233 × 134 × 11 cm

St Stephen's Basilica, National Conservation Area

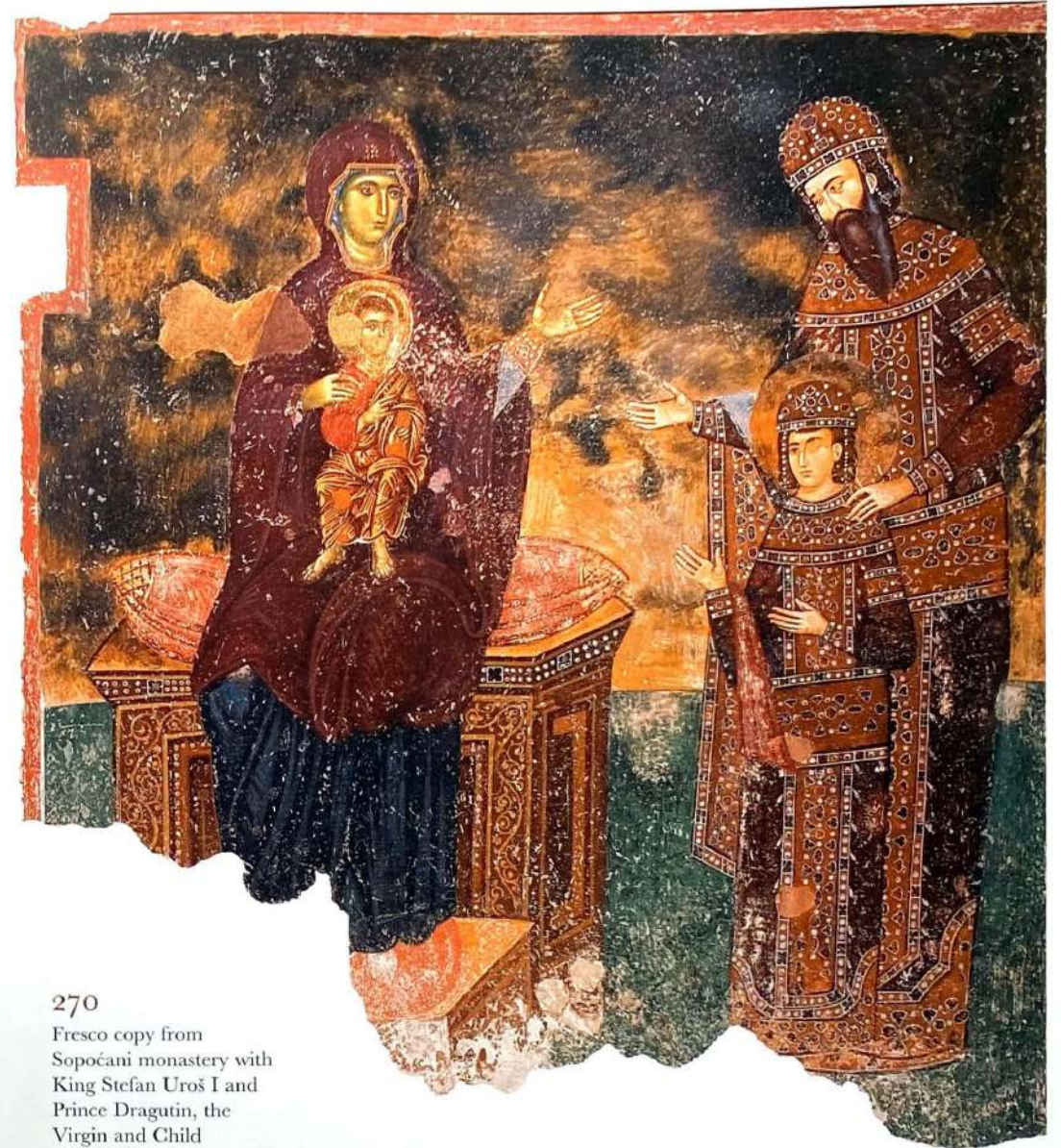






269  
Fresco copy from the  
King's Church, Studenica  
monastery, with patrons  
and saints

1314 (copied by Svetislav Mandić,  
20 January 1964)  
Tempera on canvas, 218 x 180 cm  
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 704



270  
Fresco copy from  
Sopoćani monastery with  
King Stefan Uroš I and  
Prince Dragutin, the  
Virgin and Child

Third quarter of the thirteenth  
century (copied by Časlav Colić,  
20 December 1987)  
Tempera on canvas, 138 x 350 cm  
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 1322



271.1-4

Enamel plaques with  
St John the Baptist and  
the Archangels Michael  
and Gabriel

Constantinople (?), second half  
of the eleventh century  
Cloisonné enamel and gold;  
5.9 × 5.5 cm; 5.8 × 5.3 cm;  
5.8 × 5.3 cm; 5.3 × 5.3 cm

National Museum, Belgrade;  
inv. nos. 202, 203, 204, 205







272 ↖

Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the  
fourteenth century  
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree,  
granulation, height 3.5 cm;  
diameter 6.6 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 310

273 →

Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the  
fourteenth century  
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree,  
granulation, height 3.1 cm;  
diameter 6.6 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 312

274 ↘

Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the  
fourteenth century  
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree,  
granulation, height 2.4 cm;  
diameter 6.8 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 310

275 ↘

Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the  
fourteenth century  
Silver, cast, wrought, twisted,  
granulation, filigree, height 2.7 cm;  
width 8.9 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 311



276 ↑

Queen Theodora's ring

Serbia, before 1332  
Gold, niello, height 2.9 cm;  
width 2.3 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 312

277 ↘

Ring

Serbia, first half of the  
fourteenth century  
Silver, cast, twisted, granulation,  
filigree, height 3 cm; width 2.5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 318

278 ↓

Buckle of Prince  
Petar of Hum

Goldsmith's workshop in Split, 1220s  
Gold, 5.1 × 5.4 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 225





279

Dušan's cup

Serbia, 1345–55  
Silver, gilded, cast, engraved, height  
3.6 cm; diameter 18.6 cm; width  
with handle 26.8 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2001



280

Cup

Serbia, fifteenth century  
Silver, gilt, cast, chased, punctuated,  
engraved, soldered, 5.6 x 15 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2001







281

Royal doors with the  
Annunciation

Serbia, second half of the fourteenth  
century

Tempera (?) on wood, relief,  
woodcarving, 121.8 x 62.5 x 5.4 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 3413

282 →

Fragment of a reliquary

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth  
century

Carved wood, chased silver, 4.4 x 3.3  
x 0.9 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 317



283 ↘

Earrings

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth  
century

Silver-gilt, gemstones, cast, faceted,  
hammered, filigree, 6.9 x 7.2 cm  
(setting); 4 x 7.4 cm (fragment)

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 368



284 ↓

Head ornament

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth  
century

Silver-gilt, gemstones, beaten,  
filigree, semi-precious stones, length  
23 cm; width 2 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 366







285 ←

Stone khatchkar of  
Aputayli

Noraduz cemetery in Sewan, near  
Lake Sevan, northern Armenia, 1225  
Tufa (stone), 175 × 100 × 31 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&L  
1977.5.5.1

286 →

Paten (diskos) with scenes  
of the Passion of Christ

Central Asia, ninth or tenth century  
Gilded, cast, chased and incised  
silver, diameter 23 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg,  
inv. no. 00731





КНѢВСЕДЮДНЮУ ВЪДѢСТНѢ  
ПНШЕДЮУ КШНГЪ ААДНЪ 6



287

Gospels with Tsar Ivan  
Alexander, folio 272v

Turnovo, 1355–56  
Tempera and gold on parchment,  
33.5 × 25 cm

The British Library, London, Add. 39627



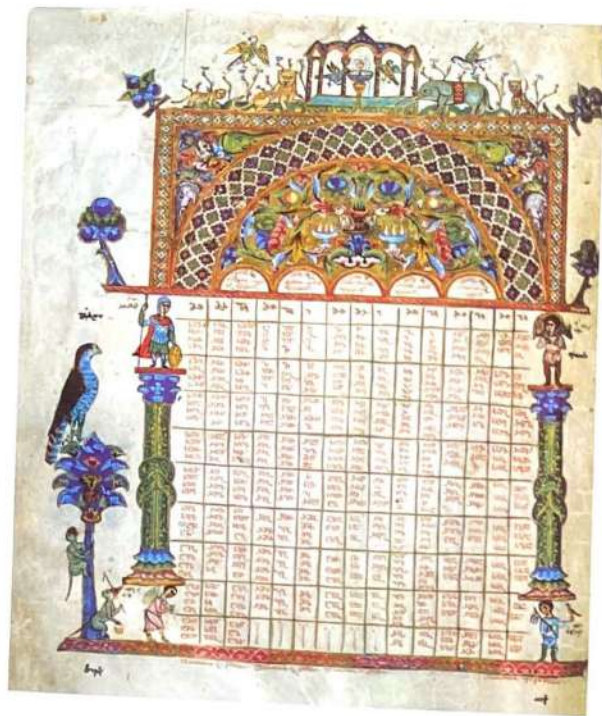
288

Fragments of the robe of  
Tsar Ivan Alexander

Byzantium, 1331–71  
Silk-based textile embroidered with  
silver-gilt, silver and silk threads,  
8.5 × 49 cm; 8.5 × 48 cm; 8 × 46.5  
cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 5844



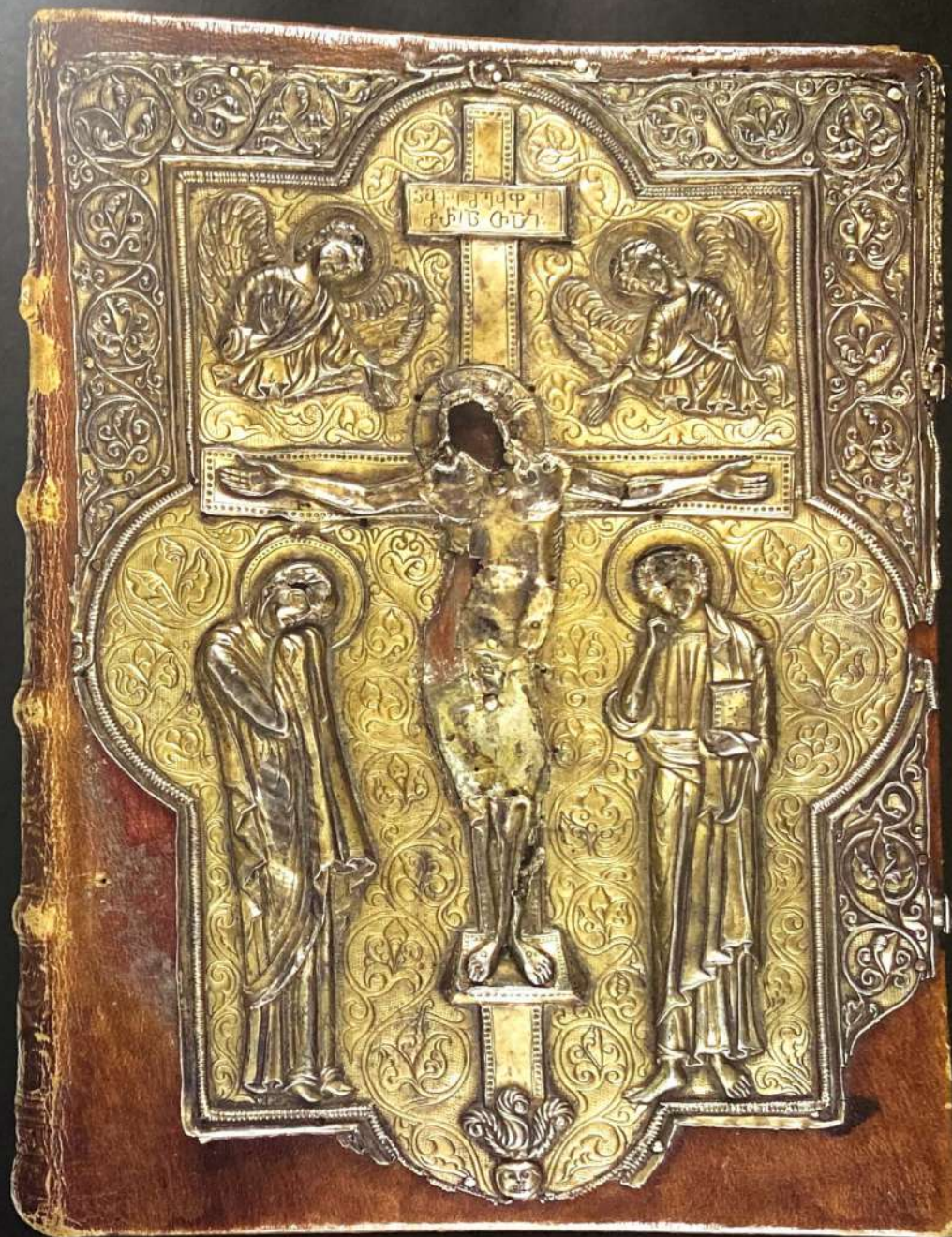


289 ↑  
The Vani Gospels, folio 3v  
Constantinople, c. 1260  
Manuscript, 28.5 × 19.5 cm;  
247 folios  
National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, A1335

290 ↗  
Covers of the Tsqarostavi  
Gospels  
Tao-Klarjeti (south-west Georgia),  
1195  
Manuscript with silver-gilt covers,  
24.5 × 16.5 cm  
National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q2907



291 →  
Covers of the  
Theti Gospels  
Shavsheti (south-west Georgia),  
late twelfth century  
Manuscript with silver gilt covers,  
26.7 × 19.5 cm  
National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q2909







292 ←

Four Gospels with Christ, donor and scribe, folio 13 verso

Produced in 1342 at the Monastery of Drazark in Cilicia during the prelaty of Ter Mkhitar, and Ter Basilio, at the request of the priest Tiratsu, and illuminated by Sargis Pidsak  
Parchment, written in regular *bolorgir* script in black ink, 20.5 × 14.5 cm; 350 folios

293 ↑

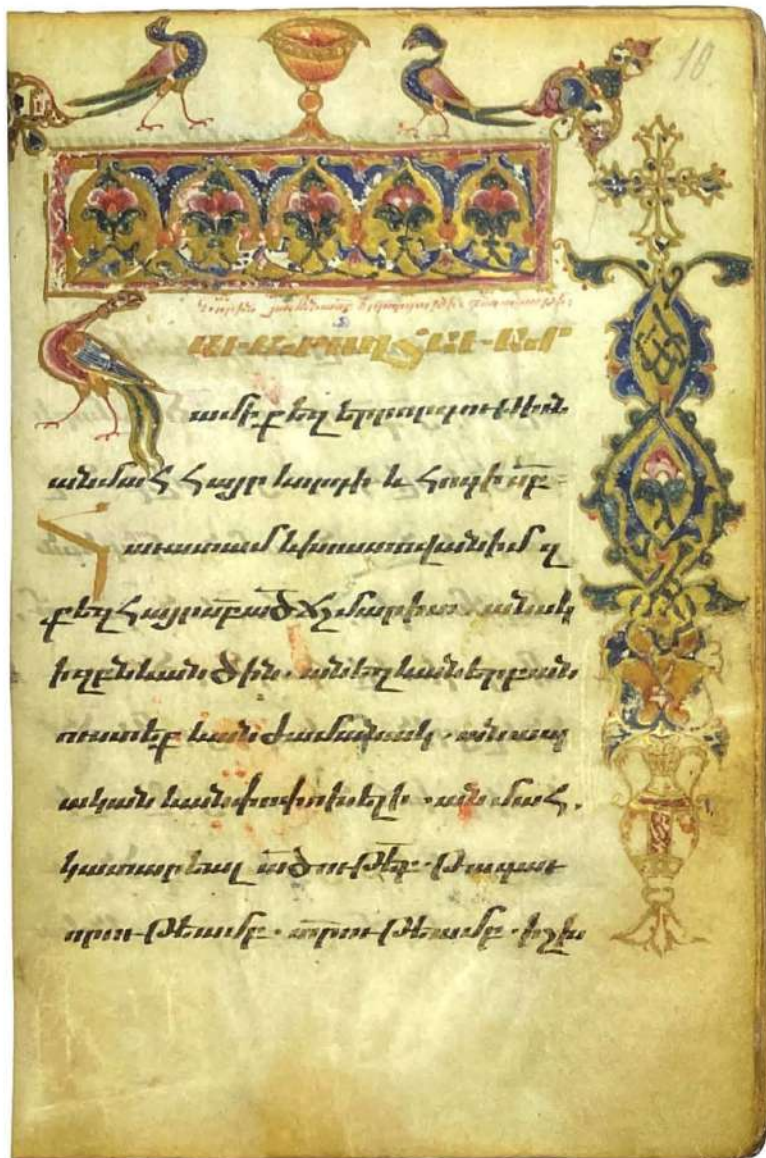
The Armenian Psalter of King Levon III, folio 3v-4r

Sis, the capital of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, 1283.  
Illuminated by Sargis Pidsak  
Vellum; written in *bolorgir* script, 24 × 17.5 cm; 259 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 13804

On loan from the Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Arm. 36.614





294 ←

STEP'ANOS VAHKATSI  
(1230–95)

Breviary of King Levon III  
of Cilician Armenia, folio  
107

Sis, the capital city of the Armenian  
kingdom of Cilicia (?; 1269–89;  
Copied for King Levon III (1269–  
89), son of Het'uni (1226–69)  
Parchment, written in *bolnisi* script,  
16.5 × 13 cm; 190 folios

The British Library, London, Or 13993

295 →

Four Gospels with a  
serpent curled around a  
trunk, folio 2187

Sis in the Kingdom of Armenian  
Cilicia, 1217  
Oriental paper, 25.9 × 19 cm; 286  
folios

The Synchrotron of Cambridge University Library, Ms  
Add. 2620



218

նորաւղեւունքն

նոր ինչեղեն:

Լ ուղեւորներ

և կեանքներ լոյս

մարդկան: և լոյսն

խառարիանդ լո

սատուրէ: և խառար

նմանցեղեւնաց:

Լ զեւրոմաստա

բեալայ, անուն

նմանցեղեւնաց:

սաեկնիւկայո

Թիւն, զիւկայես

ցեւանլոյսն:

զիւանեքին, չա

ատասցեննուլա:

ոչերնալոյսն, այդ

զիւկայեսցեւան

լոյսն:





296 ←

T'OROS ROSLIN (fl. 1256–68),  
possibly with a collaborator or  
assistant

Gospel-book of T'oros the  
Priest, folio 109r

1262, with seventeenth-century  
binding  
Ink, paint and gold on parchment,  
29.5 × 22 cm (20 × 13.6 cm); 419  
folios + 2 flyleaves, one at the  
beginning and one at the end, each  
from earlier manuscripts

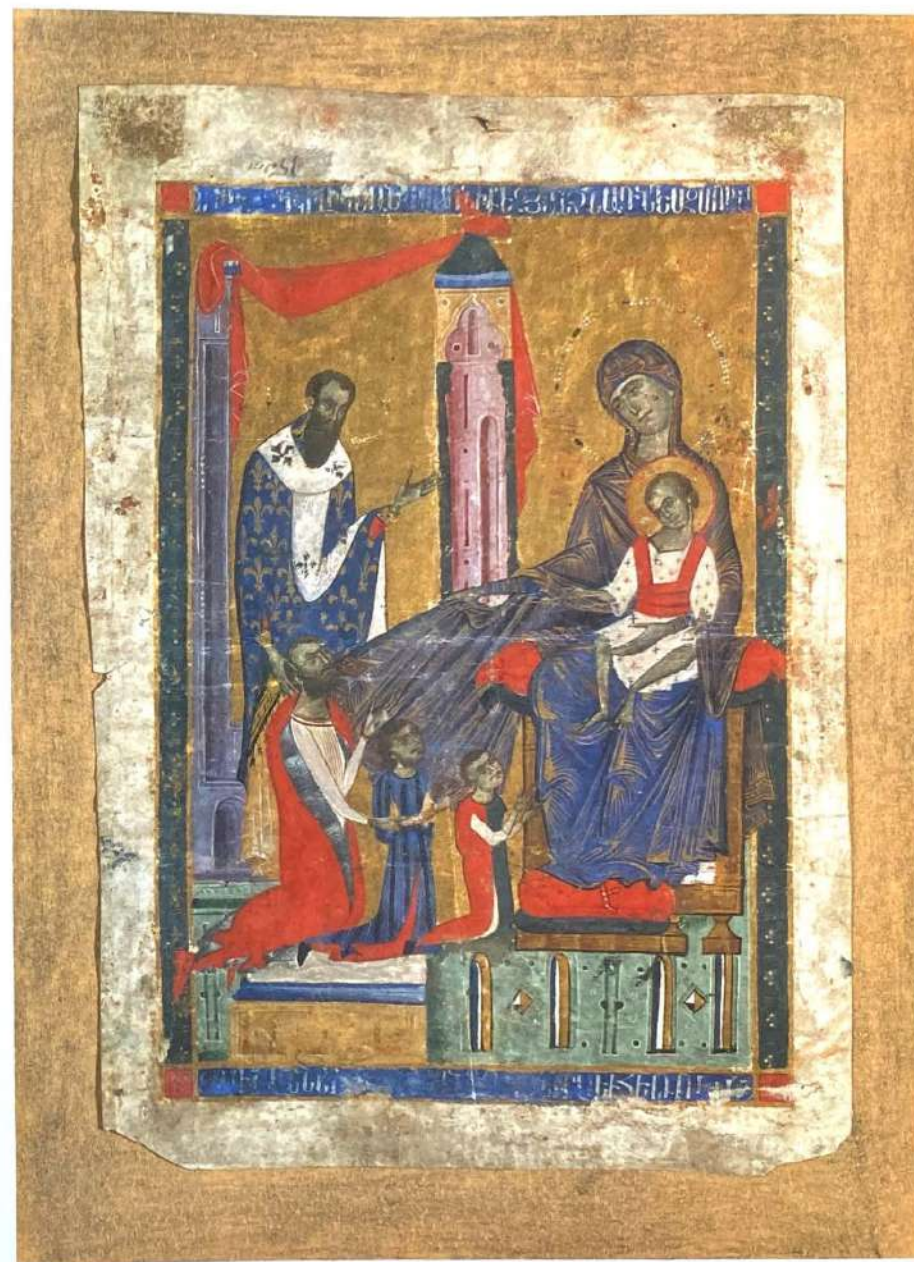
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W.339

297 →

Manuscript with donor  
before the Madonna della  
Misericordia

Sis, Cilicia, 1274

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.  
Purchased in 1928 with the help of the Fellows.  
Acquisition Fund, the Institut de Recherche sur les  
Miniatures Arméniennes Byzantines, the Manougian  
Simone Foundation, the L. W. Frohlich Charitable  
Trust, in memory of L. W. Frohlich and Thomas R.  
Barr, in recognition of their interest in and  
contributions to the arts of the western world, the  
Hagop Kevorkian Fund, Kahane P. and Emma  
Soglian, Antrang and Vahram Sarkissian, and an  
anonymous donor, in memory of Sirapap Der  
Nersisiani. Acc. no. 96.10.111



298 →

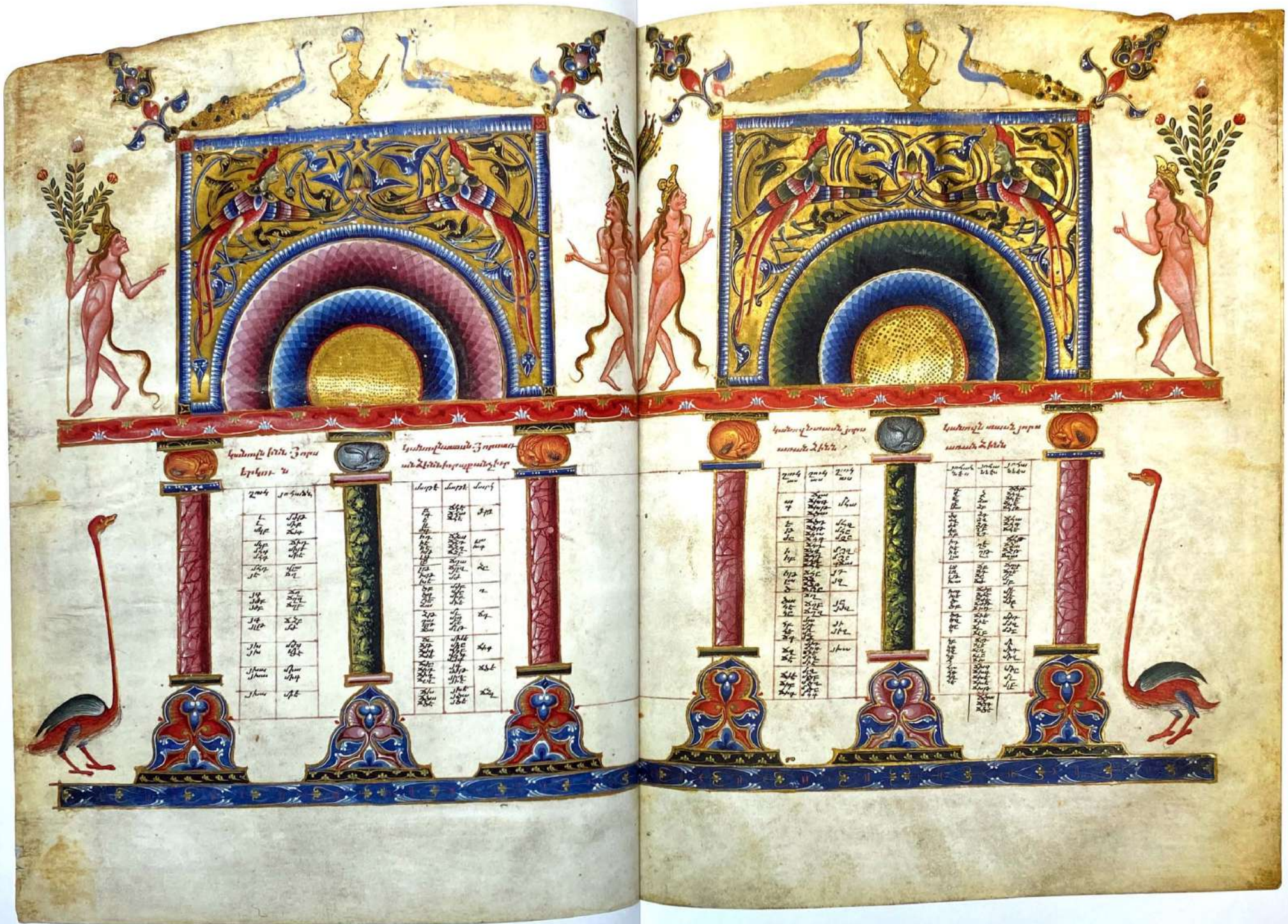
Marshal Oshin's Gospels,  
folio 4v-5r

Sis, Cilicia, 1274

Parchment, 29 × 21.2 cm; 320 folios

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.  
Purchased in 1928, acc. no. 96.10.111









299 †

Four Gospels with the  
Virgin and Child and  
donor and Mary  
Magdalene, folio 257

Village of Shikbak in the region of  
Tayk, in the Church of St Sargis,  
8 September 1313  
Paper, written in large *bolongo* script,  
32 × 23 cm; 259 folios

The John Rylands Library, University of  
Manchester, inv. no. Arm. 10



300 →

Miniature with St Luke  
and Theophilus, folio 3r

Monastery of Grner (?), Armenian  
kingdom of Cilicia, thirteenth  
century  
Parchment, 26 × 17 cm

Loan by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,  
Cambridge, McClean inv. 201.38

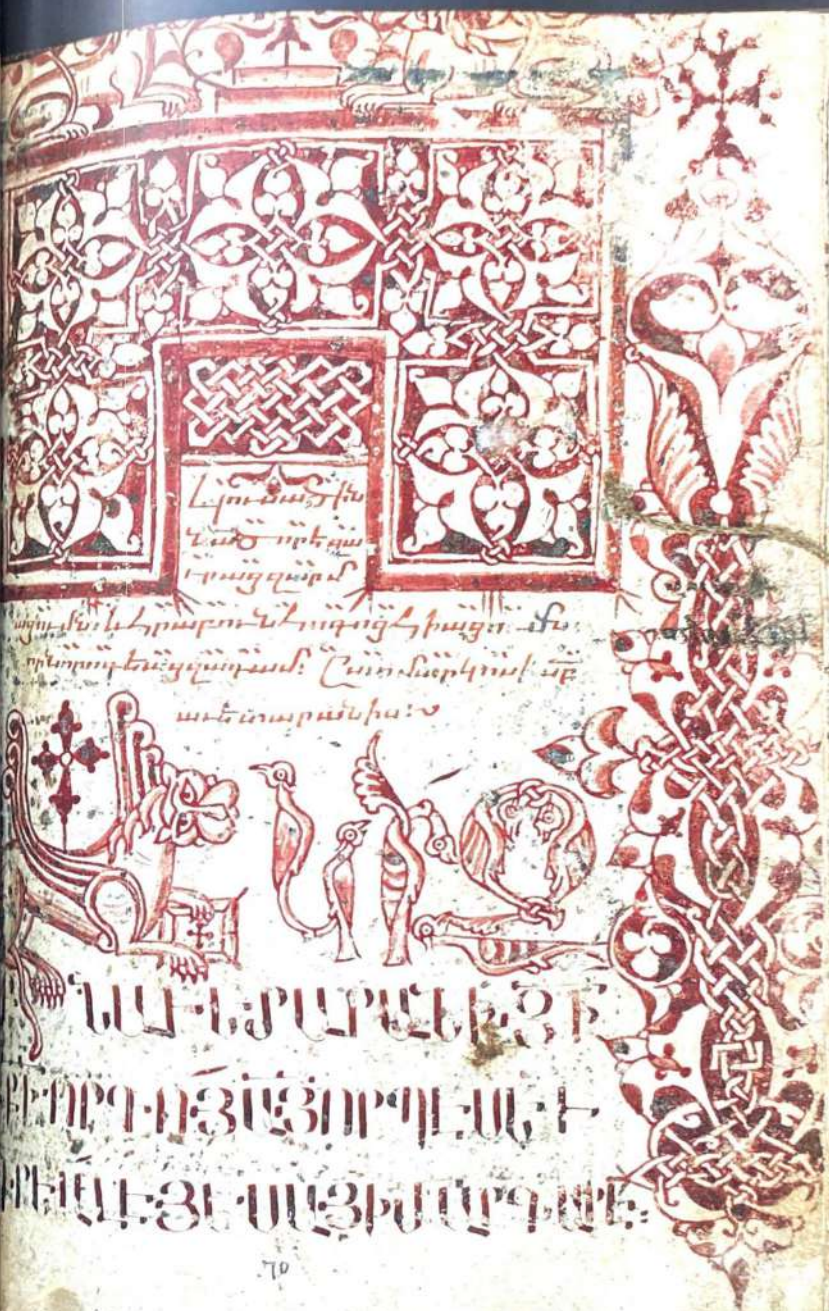
301 →

Four Gospels with Christ  
Blessing, folio 69v–70r

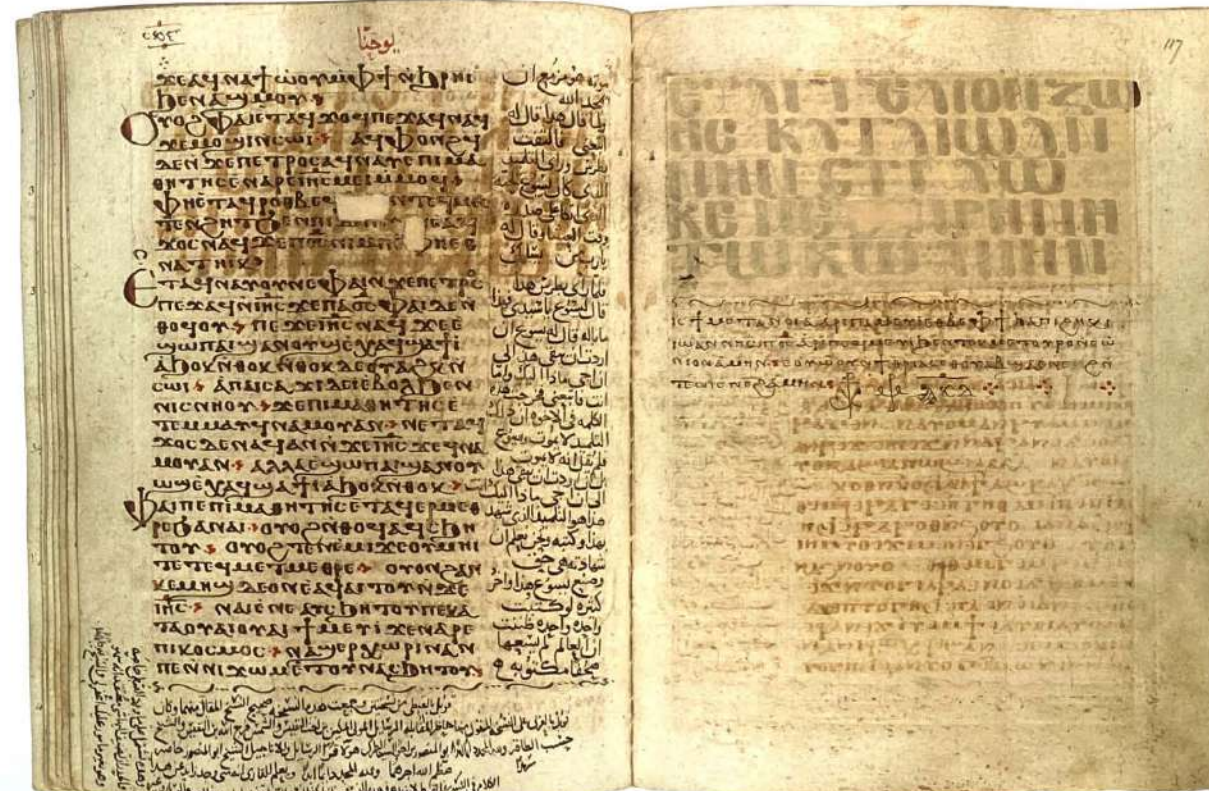
Cilicia, 1239  
Paper, 23 × 12 cm;  
111+230+111, folios

The Bible Society and the Syndics of Cambridge  
University Library, BSMS 77













Gospel lectionary with the  
Holy Women at the  
Sepulchre and Christ's  
Appearance to Mary  
Magdalene, folio 160

Syria or Mesopotamia, around 1220  
Tempera on paper, hold estrangelo  
script, 47 x 36 cm; 264 folios

The British Library, London, Add. 7879

A book of homilies, folio *iv*

Ihrit el-Gharbiya, Fayum, south of  
Cairo, 989-90

Parchment, 37 x 27.5 cm; 28 folios  
The British Library, London, Or. 6716





## Fragments of a dish

Syria, end of thirteenth–first half of  
fourteenth century

Yellowish paste, white slip, painted  
with blue, black, turquoise and  
brown under transparent greenish  
glaze, maximum length 31 cm

Benski Museum, Athens, inv. no. B23







1



2



3



4

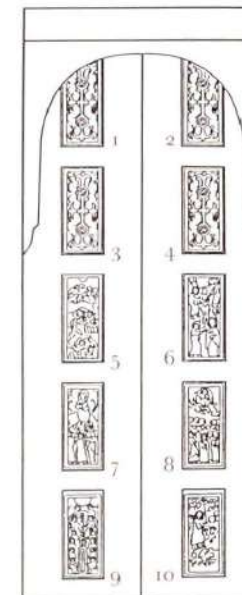
307

Door panels from the  
Church of the Virgin,  
al-Mu'allaga, Old Cairo

c.1300

Cedarwood, approximately  
31 x 13.1 x 2.5 cm

The Treasures of the British Museum, London, MA  
pl. 100, 101



5



6



7



8



9



10

353





308 ←

Casket

Norman Sicily, twelfth century  
Ivory, painted and gilded, gilt copper  
hinges, 9 x 11.2 x 7.3 cm

*Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10615*

309 ↖

Candlestick

Konya, second half  
of thirteenth century

Brass, cast, engraved  
and inlaid with silver,  
20.1 x 10.3 cm

*Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10543*



310 →

Lustre painted bowl  
with giraffe

Egypt, late tenth-  
early eleventh century  
Earthenware painted in lustre  
colours over a glaze,  
diameter 24 cm

*Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 719*



311 ↘

Bowl with leopard  
and trainer

Egypt, eleventh century  
Earthenware painted in lustre  
colours over a glaze, diameter 24.3  
cm

*Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11109*



312 →

Lustre-painted bowl with  
cup-bearer

Egypt, eleventh century  
Earthenware painted in lustre  
colours over a glaze, diameter 28 cm

*Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 706*







# 9

## The Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai

MARIA VASSILAKI AND ROBIN CORMACK



'The Glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai',  
EXODUS XXIV, 16

THE GROUP OF ICONS SHOWN HERE focuses on a major Orthodox monastic centre founded in the Byzantine period and still active to this day: the Monastery of St Catherine on the peninsula of Sinai (fig. 52). Sinai is associated with well-known Old Testament events. According to the Book of Exodus (III, 1–5), it was on Mount Horeb and at the foot of Mount Sinai that Moses, while tending the flock of his father-in-law, saw the Burning Bush and heard the voice of God asking him to remove his sandals. Later in the same book (XXIV, 16) God appeared to Moses at Sinai, again on Mount Horeb, and delivered to him the Ten Commandments. The Prophet Elijah is also associated with Sinai, as he took refuge in a cave on Mount Horeb.

It is perhaps not surprising that such a holy place attracted hermits, who inhabited the area as early as the second or third centuries AD. Pilgrims arrived in the following centuries and the well-known account of the Spanish nun Egeria, who visited Sinai in 383 and 384, is far from unique.<sup>1</sup> According to tradition, in the first decades of the fourth century Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, erected a small church close to the site of the Burning Bush, and a pilgrims' shelter, from which a tower remains to this day. The growing importance of the site is clearly reflected in the decision of the Emperor Justinian to erect a fortified monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai on the site of the Burning Bush in the mid-sixth century.<sup>2</sup> This monastery was dedicated to the Virgin of the Bush, and its main church, the so-called *katholikon*, in the form of a three-aisled basilica, seems to have been dedicated to Christ. The *katholikon* has preserved many of its sixth-century features,

among them the mosaic of the Transfiguration in the conch of the apse, the wooden carved doors that lead from the narthex to the main nave and the wooden roof beams. A supplication to the Emperor Justinian and to the memory of his wife, the Empress Theodora, in the form of a carved inscription in one of these beams allows us to date the building of the monastery precisely between 548 (the year of Theodora's death) and 565 (the year of Justinian's death). Another roof beam bears the carved supplications of the architect of the monastery, the Greek Stephanos, from nearby Eilat, and his family.

The Arab conquest of Egypt (640–42) brought the monastery into the Egyptian political orbit, in which it remains today. This reduced pilgrimages and caused a certain amount of decline, at least until the tenth century. The Muslims respected the monastery, and the Prophet Mohammed himself appears to have issued a deed for its protection in the form of an 'achtiname'. Moses is always recognised by the Muslims as a prophet and many pilgrims used to visit Sinai on their return from Mecca. The construction of a mosque within the monastery's walls, which was completed by 1106, clearly testifies to the popularity of the place among Muslims, which persists today.

The monastery was already attractive for pilgrims as an Old Testament *locus sanctus*. The fact that it was the repository of the body of St Catherine added to this. We cannot be certain when the body of the saint was discovered on the top of the mountain which bears her name and when it was brought inside the monastery. The translation of St Catherine's relics from Sinai to Rouen in Normandy in 1063 gives us a *terminus ad quem*. The relics of the saint that the monastery possessed were placed in a marble sarcophagus to the north of the diakonikon, to the south of the main sanctuary, where they started to exude oil miraculously. The earliest

reference to the veneration of St Catherine at Sinai is to be found in the typikon, which Symeon, Abbot of Sinai, drew up in 1214; the presence of her relics and the oil miraculously exuded from them are documented in twelfth-century sources.<sup>3</sup>

The Latin practice of pilgrimage to Sinai, which had started in 384 with Egeria and was continued by the so-called Piacenza pilgrim (c.570), who also wrote a diary, and others, was to become widespread over the centuries.<sup>4</sup> It reached its climax in the thirteenth century, as, from 1099, Sinai had become part of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. This and the rise of the cult of St Catherine in the West are the two main factors that appear to have contributed

to the popularity of Sinai to Western or Latin pilgrims. The flow of pilgrims to Sinai is well documented in the extant number of pilgrim guides and pilgrim narratives.<sup>5</sup> This was temporarily interrupted after the Fall of Acre in 1291 but was to be continued a few decades later on a smaller scale. In the thirteenth century Venice secured the dependencies of Sinai in Crete, Cyprus, Antioch, Latakia, Jerusalem and elsewhere. Latin pilgrims could now use Venice as a transit station and travel with Venetian ships to Jaffa or Alexandria. Latin pilgrimage to Sinai increased in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as is documented by numerous accounts of pilgrims, while Orthodox pilgrimage was sparse.<sup>6</sup>

Fig. 52  
General view of  
the Monastery of  
St Catherine, Sinai





# THE ICONS

The Monastery of St Catherine today houses a most impressive number of icons. The collection represents all periods of Byzantium and later. In 1938 the eminent Greek scholars George and Maria Soteriou were invited by the monastery to compile a list of its icons. Almost twenty years later they published their pioneering book on the icons of Sinai, in two volumes.<sup>7</sup> Between 1956 and 1965 an expedition to Sinai was organised by the Universities of Princeton, Michigan and Alexandria and headed by Kurt Weitzmann. This gave an inventory of 2,048 icons and an impressive first volume on the early icons of Sinai.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the icons at Sinai date from as early as the mid-sixth century and may have been donated by the Emperor Justinian himself. As it was under Egyptian rule during iconoclasm (730–843), the monastery experienced no acts of violation against its holy icons. Four of the early icons were taken by the Russian Archimandrite Porphyrij Uspenskij from Sinai to Kiev in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Today they belong to the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Art.<sup>10</sup> Two of these, the Virgin and Child (cat.314) and SS. Sergios and Bacchos (cat.313), are exhibited here. Still in the monastery are the three larger encaustic icons of Christ, of the Virgin and Child enthroned between archangels and saints, and of St Peter; a number of scholars have proposed that these were gifts to the monastery from the Emperor Justinian.<sup>11</sup> Thomas F. Mathews has recently argued that the Kiev icon of SS. Sergios and Bacchos was also a gift from Justinian in the mid-sixth century.<sup>12</sup> Attractive though these suggestions are for giving a possible reconstruction of the nature of the decoration of the Sinai monastery at the time of its construction, they remain speculative and depend on stylistic datings (with little comparative evidence) and on the idea that

Constantinople had already become the main centre of production of high-quality painting, and that icons such as these were not produced in the regions. This remains problematic, for it is possible that Syria, one of the cult centres of SS. Sergios and Bacchos, was producing high-quality art in this period (see the Antioch Chalice, cat.19), as were other regions in the Byzantine Empire.

The majority of icons shown here date from the late twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. Some are closely associated with Sinai, such as Moses receiving the Ten Commandments with the Burning Bush just before his feet (cat.316). The icon with the Heavenly Ladder of St John Klimakos (cat.323) is also linked with Sinai: the text of the Heavenly Ladder was written in the seventh century by the Sinaitic monk and later abbot of the monastery whose name it bears. The icon of St George with scenes from his life (cat.315) belongs to a special type of icon (a cult image of a saint surrounded by scenes showing his or her miracles) that is better represented at Sinai than anywhere else. This icon has an inscription giving the name of its donor – a priest-monk John from Georgia in the Caucasus. Pilgrims and monks who joined the community came from near and far to Sinai. Five of the icons from Sinai form a group (cats 318–322), and we believe that four of these, those with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and the Apostles Peter and Paul, belonged to a Deisis register in an iconostasis to which the royal doors (cat.322) with the Annunciation also belonged. The epistyle with scenes of the major festivals of the church was also made to decorate the screen of a chapel in the monastery or perhaps the screen of the main church (*katholikon*) of the monastery (cat.317). The question surrounding these Middle Byzantine icons now at Sinai is how did works of such great quality and importance come to be found in such a remote location?

Were they made in Constantinople and then transported over the desert, or did artists come and work on site? What is certain is that Sinai was a place of such sanctity and reverence that some of the best art of the period might have been seen as especially appropriate for devotion and worship within its walls.

Very few of the icons at Sinai bear inscriptions with the names of their painters. The earliest name of a painter to appear on an icon at Sinai is that of Ioannis, a Sinaitic monk. The exact date of his activity is not given but he can be placed at the beginning of the twelfth century on the stylistic evidence of the work that bears his signature, a hexptych with Menologion scenes, the Last Judgement, scenes from the Miracles and the Passion of Christ and a series of renowned iconographic types of the

Virgin.<sup>13</sup> The names of the painters Stephanos and Petros are left on icons which have been dated to the thirteenth century. There is no evidence to suggest that any of them was a monk at Sinai.

One of the icons signed by the painter Stephanos is exhibited here (cat.316), but recent study has raised doubts on its thirteenth-century dating and consequently on the interpretation of Stephanos as a painter. The subject of these two icons is purely Sinaitic as one of them shows the Prophet Elijah fed by a raven and the other the Prophet Moses standing before the Burning Bush and receiving the Tablets of the Law (cat.316). Georgi Parpulov has argued against the thirteenth-century date previously proposed, and doubts that the signature on the icon, written in Greek and Arabic, means that he



Fig. 53  
The painter Petros,  
icon with the Virgin  
Blachernitissa,  
Prophet Moses and  
Patriarch Euthymios  
II of Jerusalem,  
c.1223. Egg  
tempera on wood,  
45.4 × 37.5 cm  
The Holy Monastery of  
St Catherine, Sinai,  
Collection of Icons





Fig. 54.  
Martinus de Vilanova,  
altar panel with  
St Catherine, 1387.  
Egg tempera on  
wood, 127.3 x 56.5 cm

Monastery of St Catherine,  
Sinai, Collection of Icons

is the painter.<sup>14</sup> Instead he states that the styles of the painting and the Arabic script belong to the second half of the eleventh century, and that Stephanos was claiming to be only the donor. This conclusion needs further discussion, as the inscriptions in both languages in the Moses icon refer to 'Stephanos who painted your likeness' (in Greek) and 'Stephanos who painted your virtues' (in Arabic). All commentators have assumed that these two large icons were made at the Sinai monastery itself.

The painter Petros is better documented, as he left his name on four icons at Sinai.<sup>15</sup> In all four the type of his signature appears in the form of 'Prayer of Petros the painter', and thus it is obvious that he was their donor too. A firm date of his presence at Sinai is given by one of these icons (fig. 53), on which the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Euthymios II, is depicted together with the Virgin Blachernitissa and the Prophet Moses. The patriarch is called 'blessed' in the inscription above his head, signifying that he was already dead when the panel was painted. Euthymios died during his visit to Sinai and his tombstone survives in the north-east corner of the *katholikon*, bearing the date 13 December 1223. It follows that the icon depicting Patriarch Euthymios must have been painted shortly after his death.

The diversity of the collection at Sinai is clearly illustrated by an altar panel depicting St Catherine (fig. 54). An inscription in Old Catalan gives the date 1387 and the name of the donor, the Catalan consul in Damascus, Bernardo Maresa, who commissioned the work in Barcelona. The name of the painter, Martinus de Vilanova, is written on the back.<sup>16</sup>

An impressive number of icons dating from the thirteenth century have adopted Western elements to such a degree that Kurt Weitzmann was led to assume that they were painted at Sinai by Crusader artists who settled in the monastery

at that time.<sup>17</sup> This view has been challenged, but what still remains uncertain is the nationality of the painters who managed to execute icons in a thoroughly Western style (fig. 55). Syria, Palestine, Cyprus and Acre have been proposed as possible places where they may have worked.<sup>18</sup>

The close connection between Sinai and the Sinaitic metochion (dependency) of St Catherine, in Candia (modern Herakleion), Crete, which was under Venetian control from 1210 to 1669, is reflected in the icons still surviving in the monastery to this day. The earliest of these date from the first half of the fifteenth century and

bear the signature of renowned Cretan painters of the period, such as Angelos Akotantos (fl. c. 1425–50) and Andreas Ritzos (1421–92).<sup>19</sup> Cretan icons from later centuries are far more numerous but they fall outside the scope of this book. The impact that Sinai had on Cretan painters is clearly reflected in the two views of Mount Sinai which Domenikos Theotokopoulos, better known today as El Greco, painted between c. 1565 and 1570: one for the Modena triptych and a second for the panel now in the Historical Museum of Crete in Herakleion.<sup>20</sup>



Fig. 55.  
Crusader artist,  
triptych with the  
Virgin and Child  
Enthroned and scenes  
from the Life of  
Christ and the Virgin,  
mid-thirteenth  
century. Egg tempera  
on wood, central  
panel 56.8 x 47.7 cm;  
left wing 53.7 x  
21.7 cm; right wing  
53.8 x 21 cm

Monastery of St Catherine,  
Sinai, Collection of Icons



313 \*  
Icon with Christ with SS  
Sergios and Bacchos  
Constantinople, sixth or seventh  
century  
Encaustic and gold on pine,  
28.5 x 40.0 cm  
The Patek and Varian Khalouzi Museum of  
Art, New York

314 →  
Icon with the Virgin  
and Child  
Constantinople, sixth century  
Encaustic and gold on larch,  
35.4 x 20.6 cm  
The Patek and Varian Khalouzi Museum of  
Art, New York







315 ★  
Icon of St George and  
scenes of his life and  
miracles

Sinai (?), beginning of  
the thirteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood,  
primed with cloth and gesso,  
127 × 80.6 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai

316 →  
Icon of the Prophet Moses  
before the Burning Bush  
and receiving the Tablets  
of the Law

Sinai (?), late twelfth-  
early thirteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood,  
primed with cloth and gesso,  
132.5 × 69.9 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai







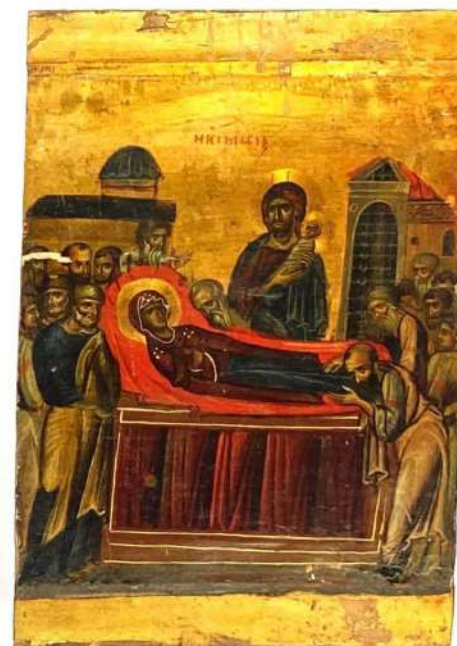
317

Iconostasis beam with the  
Great Feasts and Deisis

Sinai (?), around 1200

Egg tempera and gold leaf  
on wood, primed with cloth  
and gesso, 152.3 × 38.7 cm;  
25.8 × 38.5 cm (Koimesis of  
the Virgin)

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai



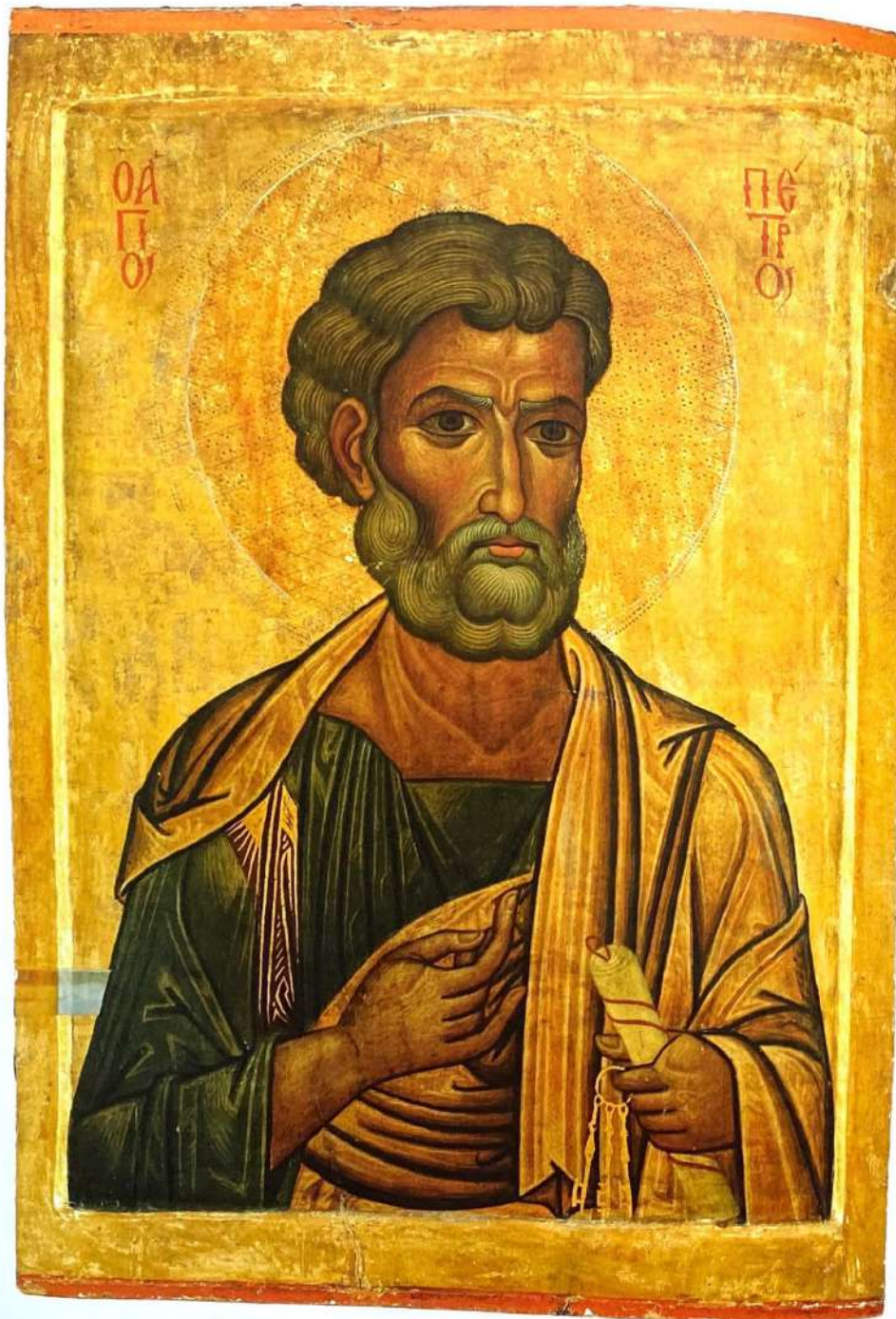


318, 319

Deisis with St Peter and  
Archangel Michael

Sinai (?), thirteenth century  
Tempera on wood,  
105.7 × 71.1 cm (Peter);  
105.5 × 75.5 cm (Michael)

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai







320, 321  
Deisis with Archangel  
Gabriel and St Paul  
Sinai (2), thirteenth century  
Tempera on wood,  
105 x 75 cm (Gabriel);  
104.3 x 69.8 cm (Paul)  
The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai





### 322 • Sanctuary door with Annunciation

Sinai (?), thirteenth century  
Tempera on linc in over wood,  
120 x 31.5 cm and  
108 x 42.5 cm

The Holy Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai,  
Church of the Dormition of the Virgin

### 323 • Icon of the Heavenly Ladder of St John Klimakos

Constantinople or Sinai,  
late twelfth century  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on  
wood, primed with cloth  
and gesso, 41.5 x 29.5 cm

The Holy Monastery of St. Catherine, Sinai







Catalogue entries



## 1 The Beginnings of Christian Art

1

### Jonah Cast Up

Eastern Mediterranean, second half of the third century  
Marble, 41.5 × 36 × 18.5 cm

Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1965.198

2

### Jonah beneath the Gourd Tree

Eastern Mediterranean, second half of the third century  
Marble, 32.3 × 46.3 × 18 cm

Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1965.299  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Wixom 1967; Fort Worth 2007, p. 191

These two marble sculptures belong to a group of eleven small sculptures acquired in New York in 1965, said to have been found in south-west Asia Minor in one huge jar (Wixom 1967). The collection was of three pairs of male and female bust portraits and five symbolic pieces with Christian subjects. Each of the portraits seem to represent the same figures, presumably a husband and wife, and probably aristocratic Romans converted to Christianity with a taste for high-class sculpture. One of the symbolic pieces is a youthful Good Shepherd, a subject used in Early Christian art to represent Christ. The other four pieces are a praying figure, probably Jonah; Jonah swallowed by a great fish; Jonah cast up from the fish; and Jonah beneath the gourd tree.

According to the biblical Book of Jonah, God told Jonah to preach at Nineveh, but instead he fled by boat towards Tarshish. God sent a tempest and when the sailors discovered Jonah was the cause of the storm they threw him overboard. He was swallowed by a fish and repented inside its belly; after three days he was disgorged unharmed and rested under the gourd tree. Christ made a reference (Matthew xii, 40) to the story of Jonah as an Old Testament prefiguration of his own death and resurrection.

It has been proposed that this group was intended to ornament a house, fountain or a tomb, but the excellent state of the sculptures and the struts may mean that they were never finished for display. Jonah is shown bearded, and this is unusual. The style of his face is reminiscent of Greco-Roman traditions – it has been compared to the Laocoön, and this underlines the fact that the earliest Christian and Byzantine sculpture and painting develops directly out of the Classical tradition. The artist was especially imaginative in the visualising of the great fish.

ROBIN CORMACK

3

### Table support with figure of the Good Shepherd

Asia Minor (?), mid-fourth century  
Marble, 95 × 24 × 18 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, AG 449  
PROVENANCE: Thessaloniki, seventh century; 'Asia' north complex  
SELECTED REFERENCES: unpublished

This support was for an extravagant table. It has the image of the Good Shepherd on its main face, standing, wearing a short, sleeveless chiton and boots. He has short, curly hair and expressive eyes. His head is turned slightly to the right. In his left hand, now broken, he once held a shepherd's crook, and an animal sat at his feet.

The marble plaque, which was supported by this upright, has not survived. The roughly finished reverse side shows that the table was positioned against a wall. It was found broken in the entrance of a tomb complex dating from 350–400 (Makropoulou 1990, p. 337); vessels and food, required for funerary rituals, would have been placed upon it by relatives of the dead.

Three such table supports with the Good Shepherd have been discovered in Thessaloniki (Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1985, no. 27, pp. 122–5), this being the only one found in a cemetery.

The piece probably comes from one of the marble tables made in workshops in Asia Minor in the third to fourth centuries. They were used in both private and public spaces (Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1990, p. 205), though recent excavation finds show that they were also employed in Christian cemeteries.

The image of the young shepherd had its origins in the Moschophoros (calf-bearer) of Antiquity, later evolving into an allusion to the peaceful, pastoral life; in the third century it seems to have acquired a new meaning, symbolising Christ himself.

The Good Shepherd occurs in third- to fourth-century sarcophagus sculptures (Paderborn 2001, no. 1.1, p. 78), and also as freestanding pieces. At Thessaloniki the subject is found in four third- to fourth-century tombs painted with Old and New Testament themes (Marki 2006, nos 15, 49, 52, 89, figs 3a, 7a–c, 6a).

ANTIGONI TZITZIRASSI

4

### Cameo with warrior horseman

First half of the fourth century  
Carved, polished, multi-layered sardonyx, 15 × 19 × 2.5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, 1164/9  
PROVENANCE: accidental find at Mladenovac, Kvozdak locality (municipality of Belgrade)  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Belgrade 1987, no. 233 (J. Kandić); Rimini 2003, with quoted literature; Rimini 2003, no. 64, p. 316; Trier 2007, CD 1.7.33

Only part of this large cameo, which was probably originally circular in shape, has been preserved. It depicts a warrior horseman riding triumphantly

over his dead, captured or bound enemies. Darker shades of the exquisitely carved and polished stone are used for portraying the figures, then accentuating these against the milky-blue background. All the figures are set on the same plane, then this flat layer is 'applied' to the base stone. The central position belongs to the horseman astride his luxuriously equipped steed, who proudly tramples his enemies. The warrior holds the reins in his left hand, and he hurls a spear with his right. He is dressed in a tunic and armour, and a cloak billows out from his shoulders. His feet are clad in boots. Thick curls fall around his forehead and on top of these is a diadem indicating his royal rank.

In terms of style, the cameo belongs to the middle of the fourth century. Everything that is represented can also be seen in the battle scenes depicted on the porphyry sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum of Helena (the mother of Constantine the Great) that dates from the second quarter of the fourth century. It follows that the most likely identification of the rider is Constantine the Great (306–37). This dating is supported by the gold coins of 325/326, in which Constantine is also shown wearing a band round his head – perhaps an allusion to Alexander.

JELENA KONDIĆ

5

### Head of Constantine I, the Great

325–30  
Cast bronze, gilt, height 36 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, 79-90  
PROVENANCE: accidental find at Niš  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Belgrade 1987, no. 233 (J. Kandić); Rimini 2003, no. 9, p. 312; Trier 2007, CD 1.8.3

This famous bronze head is part of the monumental gilded bronze statue of Constantine I (Gaius Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus), son of tetrarch Constantius I and Helena, who was born in Niš (Serbia), the famed ancient town of Naissus. This unique portrait illustrates some of Constantine's characteristics: the square angular jaw, the long curved nose, the hair worn like a cap, always with the soft, thick curls framing his face, and the complete absence of movement. The eyebrows are arched and set above large, almond-shaped eyes with pronounced eyelids. On his head Constantine wears the imperial diadem, which appears on coins from 324 on.

In this portrait sculpture, the style chosen is highly traditional, and the reason for this choice is to emphasise that Constantine is in the tradition of the great rulers of the past, such as Alexander the Great, Augustus or Trajan. There are no indications in the face that he was ultimately to be celebrated as the first Christian Roman emperor.

JELENA KONDIĆ

6

### Fragment of a sarcophagus front with St Peter

Constantinople, last third of the fifth century  
Proconnesian marble, 102 × 80 cm

Städtische Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 4734  
PROVENANCE: found near Alayon, Turkey, 1889  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Effenberger 1989, figs 106b, 106c, 106d, 106e, 106f, 106g, 106h, 106i, 106j, 106k, 106l, 106m, 106n, 106o, 106p, 106q, 106r, 106s, 106t, 106u, 106v, 106w, 106x, 106y, 106z, 106aa, 106ab, 106ac, 106ad, 106ae, 106af, 106ag, 106ah, 106ai, 106aj, 106ak, 106al, 106am, 106an, 106ao, 106ap, 106aq, 106ar, 106as, 106at, 106au, 106av, 106aw, 106ax, 106ay, 106az, 106ba, 106bb, 106bc, 106bd, 106be, 106bf, 106bg, 106bh, 106bi, 106bj, 106bk, 106bl, 106bm, 106bn, 106bo, 106bp, 106bq, 106br, 106bs, 106bt, 106bu, 106bv, 106bw, 106bx, 106by, 106bz, 106ca, 106cb, 106cc, 106cd, 106ce, 106cf, 106cg, 106ch, 106ci, 106cj, 106ck, 106cl, 106cm, 106cn, 106co, 106cp, 106cq, 106cr, 106cs, 106ct, 106cu, 106cv, 106cw, 106cx, 106cy, 106cz, 106da, 106db, 106dc, 106dd, 106de, 106df, 106dg, 106dh, 106di, 106dj, 106dk, 106dl, 106dm, 106dn, 106do, 106dp, 106dq, 106dr, 106ds, 106dt, 106du, 106dv, 106dw, 106dx, 106dy, 106dz, 106ea, 106eb, 106ec, 106ed, 106ee, 106ef, 106eg, 106eh, 106ei, 106ej, 106ek, 106el, 106em, 106en, 106eo, 106ep, 106eq, 106er, 106es, 106et, 106eu, 106ev, 106ew, 106ex, 106ey, 106ez, 106fa, 106fb, 106fc, 106fd, 106fe, 106ff, 106fg, 106fh, 106fi, 106fj, 106fk, 106fl, 106fm, 106fn, 106fo, 106fp, 106fq, 106fr, 106fs, 106ft, 106fu, 106fv, 106fw, 106fx, 106fy, 106fz, 106ga, 106gb, 106gc, 106gd, 106ge, 106gf, 106gg, 106gh, 106gi, 106gj, 106gk, 106gl, 106gm, 106gn, 106go, 106gp, 106gq, 106gr, 106gs, 106gt, 106gu, 106gv, 106gw, 106gx, 106gy, 106gz, 106ha, 106hb, 106hc, 106hd, 106he, 106hf, 106hg, 106hi, 106hj, 106hk, 106hl, 106hm, 106hn, 106ho, 106hp, 106hq, 106hr, 106hs, 106ht, 106hu, 106hv, 106hw, 106hx, 106hy, 106hz, 106ia, 106ib, 106ic, 106id, 106ie, 106if, 106ig, 106ih, 106ii, 106ij, 106ik, 106il, 106im, 106in, 106io, 106ip, 106iq, 106ir, 106is, 106it, 106iu, 106iv, 106iw, 106ix, 106iy, 106iz, 106ja, 106jb, 106jc, 106jd, 106je, 106jf, 106jg, 106jh, 106ji, 106jj, 106jk, 106jl, 106jm, 106jn, 106jo, 106jp, 106jq, 106jr, 106js, 106jt, 106ju, 106jv, 106jw, 106jx, 106jy, 106jz, 106ka, 106kb, 106kc, 106kd, 106ke, 106kf, 106kg, 106kh, 106ki, 106kj, 106kk, 106kl, 106km, 106kn, 106ko, 106kp, 106kq, 106kr, 106ks, 106kt, 106ku, 106kv, 106kw, 106kx, 106ky, 106kz, 106la, 106lb, 106lc, 106ld, 106le, 106lf, 106lg, 106lh, 106li, 106lj, 106lk, 106ll, 106lm, 106ln, 106lo, 106lp, 106lq, 106lr, 106ls, 106lt, 106lu, 106lv, 106lw, 106lx, 106ly, 106lz, 106ma, 106mb, 106mc, 106md, 106me, 106mf, 106mg, 106mh, 106mi, 106mj, 106mk, 106ml, 106mm, 106mn, 106mo, 106mp, 106mq, 106mr, 106ms, 106mt, 106mu, 106mv, 106mw, 106mx, 106my, 106mz, 106na, 106nb, 106nc, 106nd, 106ne, 106nf, 106ng, 106nh, 106ni, 106nj, 106nk, 106nl, 106nm, 106nn, 106no, 106np, 106nq, 106nr, 106ns, 106nt, 106nu, 106nv, 106nw, 106nx, 106ny, 106nz, 106oa, 106ob, 106oc, 106od, 106oe, 106of, 106og, 106oh, 106oi, 106oj, 106ok, 106ol, 106om, 106on, 106oo, 106op, 106oq, 106or, 106os, 106ot, 106ou, 106ov, 106ow, 106ox, 106oy, 106oz, 106pa, 106pb, 106pc, 106pd, 106pe, 106pf, 106pg, 106ph, 106pi, 106pj, 106pk, 106pl, 106pm, 106pn, 106po, 106pp, 106pq, 106pr, 106ps, 106pt, 106pu, 106pv, 106pw, 106px, 106py, 106pz, 106qa, 106qb, 106qc, 106qd, 106qe, 106qf, 106qg, 106qh, 106qi, 106qj, 106qk, 106ql, 106qm, 106qn, 106qo, 106qp, 106qq, 106qr, 106qs, 106qt, 106qu, 106qv, 106qw, 106qx, 106qy, 106qz, 106ra, 106rb, 106rc, 106rd, 106re, 106rf, 106rg, 106rh, 106ri, 106rj, 106rk, 106rl, 106rm, 106rn, 106ro, 106rp, 106rq, 106rr, 106rs, 106rt, 106ru, 106rv, 106rw, 106rx, 106ry, 106rz, 106sa, 106sb, 106sc, 106sd, 106se, 106sf, 106sg, 106sh, 106si, 106sj, 106sk, 106sl, 106sm, 106sn, 106so, 106sp, 106sq, 106sr, 106ss, 106st, 106su, 106sv, 106sw, 106sx, 106sy, 106sz, 106ta, 106tb, 106tc, 106td, 106te, 106tf, 106tg, 106th, 106ti, 106tj, 106tk, 106tl, 106tm, 106tn, 106to, 106tp, 106tq, 106tr, 106ts, 106tt, 106tu, 106tv, 106tw, 106tx, 106ty, 106tz, 106ua, 106ub, 106uc, 106ud, 106ue, 106uf, 106ug, 106uh, 106ui, 106uj, 106uk, 106ul, 106um, 106un, 106uo, 106up, 106uq, 106ur, 106us, 106ut, 106uu, 106uv, 106uw, 106ux, 106uy, 106uz, 106va, 106vb, 106vc, 106vd, 106ve, 106vf, 106vg, 106vh, 106vi, 106vj, 106vk, 106vl, 106vm, 106vn, 106vo, 106vp, 106vq, 106vr, 106vs, 106vt, 106vu, 106vv, 106vw, 106vx, 106vy, 106vz, 106wa, 106wb, 106wc, 106wd, 106we, 106wf, 106wg, 106wh, 106wi, 106wj, 106wk, 106wl, 106wm, 106wn, 106wo, 106wp, 106wq, 106wr, 106ws, 106wt, 106wu, 106wv, 106ww, 106wx, 106wy, 106wz, 106xa, 106xb, 106xc, 106xd, 106xe, 106xf, 106xg, 106xh, 106xi, 106xj, 106xk, 106xl, 106xm, 106xn, 106xo, 106xp, 106xq, 106xr, 106xs, 106xt, 106xu, 106xv, 106xw, 106xx, 106xy, 106xz, 106ya, 106yb, 106yc, 106yd, 106ye, 106yf, 106yg, 106yh, 106yi, 106yj, 106yk, 106yl, 106ym, 106yn, 106yo, 106yp, 106yq, 106yr, 106ys, 106yt, 106yu, 106yv, 106yw, 106yx, 106yy, 106yz, 106za, 106zb, 106zc, 106zd, 106ze, 106zf, 106zg, 106zh, 106zi, 106zj, 106zk, 106zl, 106zm, 106zn, 106zo, 106zp, 106zq, 106zr, 106zs, 106zt, 106zu, 106zv, 106zw, 106zx, 106zy, 106zz

This is the right side of a broken marble panel which was made as a sarcophagus front; the back of the panel has a flared Greek cross resting on a globe and stepped base. On the basis of the design and measurements of the cross, this side has been reconstructed as consisting of two symmetrical crosses around a central motif, suggesting the original size of the panel was eight Roman feet (233 cm) in length. This gives the size of the composition on the front face.

On the right is St Peter carrying a large Latin cross with flared ends on his shoulders and raising his right hand in a gesture of astonishment. He wears the typical garments of the Apostles – a tunic and a pallium – and sandals. The nose, now lost, was attached separately. A man walks to the left of Peter, stooping and with his head lowered. He is dressed in a short, girdled tunic and short boots. His arms have broken off, but the joins show that they were extended slightly.

The lost depiction may perhaps be reconstructed with the aid of a miniature in the purple codex from Sinope (cat. 49). The image on fol. 29 represents the healing of the two blind men of Jericho (Matthew xx, 30–4). The bent walking figure in the relief would then be one of the blind men who begged Jesus to heal them. Jesus himself must have appeared towards the centre of the image. More Apostles would certainly have stood behind him on the left, witnessing, like Peter, a miracle that revealed Christ's divinity.

The relief was found in 1889 near the town of Alaçam, the Byzantine Leontopolis, on the Black Sea coast. This indicates that sarcophagus fronts were exported from Constantinople to the provinces of the Byzantine Empire.

ARNE EFFENBERGER

7

### Relief with besieged city

Egypt, fifth century  
Wood, 45 × 22 cm

Städtische Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Berlin, inv. no. 4781  
PROVENANCE: acquired from Egypt, 1900  
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1979, no. 69, pp. 81–4 (R. Brilliant); Effenberger 1992, no. 95, p. 180

This enigmatic carved relief has its upper and lower frames intact, and may be one section of a sequence of scenes. To the left of the city gate the Byzantine army arrives at the city with a soldier carrying the labarum – the army standard adopted first by Constantine and displaying the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek, XP.

The same monogram is displayed in the sixth century on the shield of one of the soldiers in the mosaic with Justinian at San Vitale, Ravenna (fig. 1). The enemy on horseback is being driven off or killed; their leaders wearing diadems hang on forked stakes outside the city wall on the right. The troops defending the city stand along the walls and above them are the buildings in the city. At the top on the left are monumental figures, possibly saints protecting the city (Brilliant, in New York 1979).

The difficulty in interpreting this victory scene is to decide whether it records some historical event, perhaps in the history of Egypt from where the relief comes, or whether it is biblical, but portrayed through Byzantine eyes. Similar realistic imagery of battle is found in the tenth-century Byzantine manuscript known as the Joshua Rotulus (Vatican Library, cod. pal. gr. 431), which is also derived from Roman triumphal art such as the Column of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius in Rome or the Column of the emperor Arkadius erected in 400 at Constantinople. The tenth-century manuscript shows the many battles of Joshua in the Holy Land. Brilliant (New York 1979) points to the rescue of Gibeon (Joshua x), who defeated the five kings of the Amorites and hung their bodies on trees, as a possible identification.

ROBIN CORMACK

8

### Part of a mosaic pavement with personifications of the months

Thebes, early sixth century  
Stone and marble, 340 × 66 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis  
PROVENANCE: excavated in Thebes  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Asimakopoulou-Atzaka 1987, no. 66, 157–9, pl. 255–64, with earlier bibliography; Hieronymus 2005, pp. 37–8, fig. 32–40

This is a part of a larger mosaic pavement found in fragmentary condition in Thebes. It probably comes from a rich private house (Lazaridis 1965, p. 253, pls 310–14).

On three sides – east, west and north – is a rare type of frame, consisting of one wavy band through which pass two straight bands. On the east side the frame is interrupted by an inscription in a *tabula ansata*, in a fragmentary state: ... / ΑΤΟ ΜΟΡΦΗΝ / ... ΜΟΝΟΝ ΟΥΔΑ ΑΓΕ ΓΗΡΑΚ / ... ΧΝΗ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΤΕΛΕΕCEN ΑΠΕΡ ΝΟΟC ΕΝΘΕΤΟ ΧΕΙΡΙ /

Because of the fragmentary state of the inscription, it cannot be completed securely. Only line 3 could be rendered freely as 'he executed all with his hand, as his mind dictated'.

The main subject consists of two panels, each with a different representation. In the north panel are four squares surrounded by a three-strand guilloche, each enclosing a personification of a month, identified by inscription and characterised

by lively movement. February holds a pair of ducks, April a sheep, July sheaves of wheat, while the corresponding object held by May has been destroyed. In the south panel is a hunting scene in a rocky landscape, with a hunter and his hound pursuing prey, while a man with deformed features named Akkolos is shown with his back turned to this scene. This south panel is framed on the east and west sides by close-packed squares in vertical arrangement forming a chain, while on the north side, in place of the frame, is an inscription:

ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΗΣ ΤΕ ΤΟ ΜΟΥCΙΟΝ ΠΟΕΙ  
ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ ΜΕΝ ΕΝΝΟΗCΑC ΤΗΝ ΓΡΑΦΗΝ  
ΤΑΥΤΗΣ ΔΑ ΥΠΟΥΡΓΟΣ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΗΣ  
ΕΥΝΟΥCΤΑΤ(ΟC)  
ΠΑΥΛΟΣ ΔΕ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΛΙΤΙΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΕΥΠΡΕΠΗC(Ο)  
ΙΕΡΕΥC ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΙΩΝ ΛΟΓΩΝ ΔΙΔΑCΚΑΛΑΟΣ  
(Demetrios and Epiphanes made the mosaic, Demetrios designed it, Epiphanes executed it with great care. Responsible for the whole work of art was Pavlos, priest and teacher of the divine word.)

The similarities between the Thebes mosaic and mosaics in the basilica at Delphi and the basilica of St Nicholas Hypate have led to the identification of a workshop of mosaicists in Central Greece (Sodini 1970, p. 745; Spiro 1978, pp. 209–11, 232–3, 305). The activities of this workshop, or at least its influence, extended to areas further afield, as is attested by the rare frame type with its undulating band passing through two straight lines, and the frame with the dense, vertically placed squares forming a chain pattern which are encountered in a building in Megalopoli, in the central Peloponnese (Asimakopoulou-Atzaka 1980, p. 240; Asimakopoulou-Atzaka 1987, p. 74, no. 17). The stylistic relationship between the mosaics in the building at Megalopoli, the basilica at Delphi and the building at Thebes is significant too, in the treatment of animals and, primarily, human figures. Outlines are emphasised and the details of the faces are rendered in the same manner: small mouths, boldly outlined eyes, noses with two lines. The personifications of the months and the hunting scenes were popular in early Byzantium and appear frequently on tessellated pavements (New York 1979, p. 271).

The importance of the Thebes mosaic, which can be dated to the early sixth century, lies in the considerable artistic merit of the workshop to which it is attributed, and to the fact that it records the names of two mosaicists, Demetrios and Epiphanes. Surely leaders of a large team employed in various regions, they are among the very few named mosaicists known from the Early Byzantine period.

EUGENIA GEROUSSI-BENDERMACHER



Tomb with wall paintings, including *Susanna and the Elders*

Thessaloniki, early fifth century  
Tomb and detached fresco, 202 × 144 × 107 cm; 170 × 127.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, 57 1708  
PROVENANCE: Thessaloniki, eastern cemetery  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Mavropoulos-Tsoumis 1983, Marks 2006, pp. 183–6, figs 41–2, pls 148, 179

This fresco comes from a chamber tomb on whose western wall was portrayed the story of Susanna and the Elders. The tomb walls are divided into two areas, the lower decorated with representations of slabs, alternately scale- and rhomboid-patterned, and columns at the corners, which terminate in pine cones and are rendered half on one wall and half on the other. The slab on the eastern wall features a lattice of rhombi, while on part of what survives of the northern wall, above a scale-patterned slab, two trees are depicted. On the western, narrow side of the tomb, which hosts the main theme, above the scale-patterned slab and the columns, two wide bands, in green and orange, represent the ground and give depth to the painting.

The central scene is bordered left and right by two trees that lean slightly towards the centre, following the slope of the ceiling. In the middle of the picture, a female figure is depicted, upright, full face, her hair carefully arranged, her legs relaxed, with one of them extending beyond the border of the painting, resting on the slab. Her hands are raised in prayer. She wears a reddish-brown chiton and a dark-coloured dalmatic, and is framed left and right by two men shown in profile, dressed in chitons and himatia, turned towards her and regarding her harshly.

The painting depicts the Old Testament story of Susanna, whom two judges accused of adultery when she resisted their improper advances, demanding that she be put to death. Susanna threw up her hands and prayed to God for help; God sent Daniel to question the Elders, the slander was discovered and Susanna's good name was restored. The story of Susanna is an allegory for the Church's triumph against heresy.

EVANGELIA ANGELKOU

## 10.1–3

## Three chair ornaments personifying Rome, Constantinople and Alexandria

Rome, after 324  
Gilded silver, 18.7 × 7 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1866.1239.21, 1866.1239.23, 1866.1239.24  
PROVENANCE: Rome, found in 1723 as part of the Esquiline treasure  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, nos 322–3; London 1977, no. 37; New York 1979, no. 135; Shelton 1981, nos 30–3; Cameron 1985, pp. 140–1; Milan 1990, nos 51–2; London 1994, nos 13–14

These chair ornaments are each composed of a hollow cast female figure attached to a socket having a soldering plate in the shape of a pendant

leaf; one figure retains the mounting of the pin and safety chain. The three seated figures are identified as personifications of the cities of Rome, Constantinople and Alexandria; Antioch (not exhibited) is the fourth. The four form two pairs of right- and left-hand figures, respectively.

Rome and Constantinople wear crested helmets, while the other two wear mural crowns, a type of garland awarded to the first Roman soldier to scale the walls of a besieged town. The ornaments' individual attributes vary. Rome holds an upright staff in one hand while the other rests on a shield; Constantinople carries a patera and a cornucopia; Alexandria holds sheaves of grain and rests her foot on a ship's prow; and Antioch, based on a famous work (of 296 BC) by the Greek sculptor Eutykides, holds fruits and sheaves of grain while a personification of the River Orontes emerges from beneath her. The foundation of the city of Constantinople in 324 provides a *terminus post quem* for the creation of these ornaments.

The grouping of personifications or tyches was associated with the emperor and Late Antique bureaucracy, and these ornaments may have been insignia of a civil or military office that has not been identified. The people who owned the Esquiline treasure, Turcius Secundus and Proiecta Turcii, belonged to a family whose members held various high positions in Rome. The four ornaments are thought to have been mounted on a sedan chair.

MARILIA MUNDELL MANGO

## 11

CRISTOFORO BUONDELONTI (c.1385–c.1430)

*Liber insularum archipelagi*

(Book of the Islands of the Archipelago)

Ghent, 1482–85

Ink and paint on parchment, 36.5 × 25.5 cm

The British Library, London, Arundel 93

PROVENANCE: Raphael de Mercatellis (c.1437–1508), abbot of St Bavon, Ghent; possibly Thomas Howard (1515–1641), 4th Earl of Arundel; 4th Earl of Surrey and 1st Earl of Norfolk, art collector and politician; Henry Howard (1618–84), 6th Duke of Norfolk, presented to the Royal Society in 1669; the Royal Society, London, purchased by the British Museum, London, 1893

SELECTED REFERENCES: Hasbach 1909–10; Berlin 1986, no. 14.53, p. 183

J. Reisinger and A. Schmidt-Burkhardt, London 2002, no. 27, p. 434 (S. Bagel)

The first 'bird's-eye view' map of Constantinople was produced by an Italian visitor, Cristoforo Buondelmonti, in the early fifteenth century. Buondelmonti was a Florentine priest who travelled through Greece recording his observations in descriptions and maps (*figurata*). He dedicated the resulting work, the *Liber insularum archipelagi* (The Book of the Islands of the Archipelago), to Cardinal Giordano Orsini in 1420. This date and the dedication were embedded in an acrostic created by the first letter of each chapter: 'Cristoforo Buondelmonti de Florentia Presbiter nunc misit cardinali Jordano de Ursinis MCCCCXX' (Cristoforo Buondelmonti of Florence, priest, now sends to Cardinal Giordano Orsini 1420).

The illustrated text proved extremely popular, and numerous medieval copies survive. Two now in the British Library, London, are shown alternately in the exhibition: a small Italian copy, and a more lavish one made in Ghent for Raphael de Mercatellis (c.1437–1508), abbot of St Bavon, an illegitimate child of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, who assembled the first great humanistic library in Flanders.

Despite its title, the *Liber insularum* also includes a description of Constantinople, perhaps because the city was the centre of shipping in the region. Buondelmonti's map corresponds directly to his description of the city. For example, he notes that Constantinople is 'triangular' and comments on its strong surrounding walls. He emphasises the great height of the dome of the Church of St Sophia, which is clearly visible as the largest building in the city in both copies of the map. Other important sites, such as the Hippodrome (directly to the south of St Sophia), are also clearly visible and labelled. These maps are remarkable survivals of an eyewitness view of Constantinople before its capture by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

KATHLEEN DOYLE

## 2

## From Constantine to Iconoclasm

## 12

## The Projecta Casket, from the Esquiline treasure

Rome, between 330 and 380  
Silver embossed and partially gilt, 28.6 × 55.9 × 43.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, M.18.1866.1239.1

SELECTED REFERENCES: Shelton 1981, no. 1, pp. 72–3; Elsner 2007, pp. 200–24

The Projecta Casket is iconographically perhaps the richest surviving object of Late Antique silverware. Made in the form of two truncated rectangular pyramids, joined at their bases, every one of its nine exposed faces is decorated in the repoussé technique. Only on the back is gilding not used. The casket was probably employed for the toilet of the lady of a grand house. Its base depicts servants carrying accoutrements of the toilet in an arcade of alternately pointed and curved arches. At the centre and in the front sits the lady of the house pinning her hair with her right hand, while the maid to her left holds up a mirror. This gesture is emulated by the nude Venus in the mythological scene on the lid above, before whom a centauromachon also holds up a mirror. On the top, in a wreath held by two cupids, the man and woman of the house appear in their finery. At the back of the lid is a domestic scene that has been interpreted as a procession to the baths or the procession of the bride to her wedding. An inscription, possibly contemporary with the object's making and certainly Late

Antique, along the horizontal rim of the casket's lid at the front, reads 'Secunde et Proiecta vivatis in Christo' (Secundus and Proiecta, live in Christ). The confrontation of mythological imagery and Christian inscription is striking, while the use of the toilet of Venus to evoke bathing in the domestic context and to play against the casket's functions is witty.

JAN ELSNER

## 13

## Diptych with Clementinus

Constantinople, 513  
Ivory, each leaf 37 × 12.5 cm

National Museums Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M.10062  
PROVENANCE: in the collection of Josiah Noyes of Nürnberg (1675–1799), mentioned in the collection of Count Mihály Wiczay of Hédervár (Hungary) before 1800, thence to Gábor Fejérváry in 1812, inherited by K. Palutsky who sold it in 1852, in 1867 Joseph Mayer left it to the city of Liverpool  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Palutsky 1876, nos 29–30; Maskell 1875, pp. 91–9; London 1979, no. 46; Delbrück 1929, no. 16; London 1934, no. 13; Edinburgh 1938, no. 26; 1939, no. 46; Delbrück 1929, no. 16; London 1934, no. 13; Edinburgh 1938, no. 26; Volbach 1976, no. 13; New York 1979, no. 48 (J. C. Anderson); Cameron 1985, no. 28; Nasr 1981, Göttingen 1984, no. 8; London 1994, no. 43 (A. Eastmond); Olovdotter 2005, nos 10, pp. 14–17

Every year on 1 January, the city of Constantinople appointed a consul to serve for one year (as did Rome). This was an honorary post, and the principal duty was to arrange a week of entertainments for the people of Constantinople, including a day of chariot-racing, two days of animal combats in the Hippodrome and two days of theatrical performances (*Constitutions of Justinian*: Scott 1932, p. 17).

This diptych commemorates Clementinus, consul for 513. The two leaves, which duplicate their imagery, are full of messages about hierarchy, wealth and power. Clementinus sits enthroned on his lion-headed consular throne, with the attributes and dress unique to his position. His name and titles are spelled out in Latin (still the official language of the empire) in the *tabula ansata* at the top of each leaf: FL(AVIVS) TAVRVS CLEMENTINVS ARMONIVS CLEMENTINVS, V(IR) ILL(VSTRIS) COM(ES) SAC(RVM) LARG(ITONVM) EX CONS(VLE) PATRIC(IVS) ET CONS(VL) ORDIN(ARIVS) (Flavius Taurus Armonius Clementinus, V(ir) Ill(ustris) Com(es) Sac(rum) Larg(itonum) ex Cons(vle) Patric(ivs) et Cons(vl) Ordin(arivs) (Flavius Taurus Armonius Clementinus, Illustrious Man, Master of the Sacred Largesse, former Consul, Patrician and Consul Ordinary; his name is also spelled out in Greek in the monogram above his head). He watches over boys pouring forth coins and ingots from sacks to demonstrate his abundant generosity. As Theoderic, Ostrogothic king of Italy, wrote to Felix, consul of Rome in 511: 'This is an occasion where extravagance earns praise...where one gains in good opinion all that one loses in wealth' (Cassiodorus, Var. III.2; cited in Cameron and Schauer 1982, p. 139). To either side of Clementinus stand personifications of Rome and Constantinople. His apparent dominance is tempered only by his acknowledgement of two higher authorities, shown at the top of the leaves: Christ, represented by the Cross, and the imperial couple, Anastasios and Ariadne.

The diptych survived because it was reused in 772 in the Church of St Agatha in Rome to record Greek prayers commemorating the accession of Pope Hadrian I (772–95). These were incised on the reverse. Spaces at the bottom of the inscription were left for images to be glued to the surface; on the left was an image of John 'the least priest of the church of St Agatha' before the Mother of God, on the right Pope Hadrian I before St Agatha (Maskell 1875, pp. 38–9). The fine marquetry frame probably dates to the eighteenth century, when the panels were mounted in reverse.

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 14

Ivory diptych leaf with a *venatio*

Rome or northern Italy, early fifth century  
Ivory, 39.4 × 12 × 0.6 cm

National Museums Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M.10062  
PROVENANCE: first recorded in 1854 in the collection of P. G. de Rougemont at Maastricht, the leaf subsequently passed through the hands of Victor Drenth and Gábor Fejérváry before its final owner, Joseph Mayer (1867–86), the Liverpool goldsmith, jeweller and collector, gave it to Liverpool in 1867  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Palutsky 1876, no. 46; London 1934, no. 25; Delbrück 1929, no. 46; London 1934, no. 12; Volbach 1976, no. 25; Krüger 1977, pp. 37–8, pl. 62; New York 1979, no. 84 (S. R. Zwiern); Cameron 1985, pp. 176–9; Frankfurt-am-Main 1983, no. 222; Gibson 1994, no. 7; London 1994, no. 43 (A. Eastmond); Olovdotter 2005, pl. 10

This leaf from an ivory diptych (whose other half is now lost) clearly establishes the intimate link between entertainments, spectacle and power in the Late Antique empire. At the top, three unnamed figures in senatorial robes sit in an elaborately decorated box at the arena. The central figure pours a libation to show his responsibility for the event and its ritual importance. He presides over a *venatio*, a stag hunt. This is shown in an overlapping narrative below, which moves from the rampant stag at the bottom to the dead animal lying at the edge of the arena below the senators' feet. The evident virility of the stags emphasises the bravery of the huntsmen, who are shown emerging from doors into the arena (one of which has a depiction of a victorious hunter on it) with no protection apart from their spears.

The emphasis on the hunting, rather than on the three presiding officials, reflects both the expense of these lavish entertainments, and the degree to which prestige was measured by their success and spectacle. The entertainments were free for the citizens to attend, and were judged by the exoticism of the animals that were displayed, and then killed, in the arena. The letters of Q. Aurelius Symmachus concerning his son's quaestorian and praetorian games of 394 and 401 show that diptychs and other gifts were used to advertise families' involvements and consolidate alliances among the élite of the empire: 'It is a solemn and delightful obligation for quaestors *candidati* to present the customary gifts to people of consequence and close friends, in which number you are naturally included.

So I offer you an ivory diptych and a small silver bowl weighing two pounds in my son's name, and I beg you to accept this token of respect with pleasure' (Ep. 7.76, cited in Cameron 1992, p. 180).

The date and origin of the ivory is established by its close stylistic and iconographic link to other ivories, such as the Lampadii ivory in Brescia, which has a similar form but shows chariot-racing (Volbach 1976, no. 54).

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 15

## Leaf of the consular diptych of Basilius

Rome (?), 541

Ivory, 34.5 × 13 cm

Inscription on the architrave: ANIC(IVS) FAUST(US) ALBIN(US) BASILIUS V(IR) C(LARISSIMUS)

Supplementum speculae per 3 Pula Museale Florentina, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, inv. no. 48  
PROVENANCE: referred to the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, by connoisseurs Apollonio Bassoli  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Delbrück 1929, no. 6, p. 100, pl. 6; Bocini and Onisigghi 1975, no. 20, fig. 38; Volbach 1976, no. 5, p. 10, pl. 5; New York 1979, no. 47, pp. 47–8 (J. C. Anderson); Cameron and Schauer 1982, Olovdotter 2005, no. 8, pp. 24–5, 107–14, pl. 8

This ivory is the front leaf of a diptych whose rear leaf is kept at the Castello Sforzesco, Milan (New York 1979, no. 46, pp. 47–8 [J. C. Anderson]; Olovdotter 2005, pp. 34, 36, 110–14). Believed for a long time to belong to Basilius, consul of 480, the diptych has been recently assigned to Basilius, a member of a renowned Roman aristocratic family, who assumed the eastern consulship in 541, a few months after the re-establishment of the rule of the Eastern Empire in Italy (Cameron and Schauer 1982). Carved in shallow relief, the standing consul holds a sceptre, probably recarved later at its top, and the mappa. The personification of Rome embraces him by the shoulder and holds the consular fasces. The lower register comprises a scene of four chariots racing around the *spina* of the Circus Maximus and a man holding a codicil and pointing out the upper scene to a youth. The ground is bordered by a Lesbian moulding; an architrave supported by two columns runs along the top.

The diptychs of Felix and Boethius (Volbach 1976, nos 2 and 6, dated to 428 and 487, respectively) may have been the models for this work. The embrace of Rome, an act of distinction and friendship, indicates the consul's close relationship with the ruling class of the old capital. The chariot race corresponds to the same scene in the Lampadii ivory, c.400 (Rome 2000a, no. 33, pp. 445–7; Mariotti 2007, p. 255). The pair of the *tagatus* and the youth has parallels with the men acclaiming the consul in the Halberstadt diptych or Rufius Probianus in his own diptych, both dated to the early fifth century (Volbach 1976, nos 35 and 62). The panel should be assigned to the sixth century: the rendering of the fasces is similar to the Philoxenus diptych of 525 (Volbach 1976, no. 28) and the sharp, flat and



schematic rendering of the figures postdates the above-mentioned fifth-century ivories.

IOANNIS D. VARALIS

16

### Diptych with Asklepios and Hygieia

Rome, c.400–50  
Ivory, each leaf 31.4 × 13.9 × 0.6 cm

**PROVENANCE:** This diptych has been recorded from c. 1500, when it was described in the *Gaddi Collection* in Florence (Gibson 1994, pl. viii). A manuscript box was created for it in the mid-eighteenth century, at about the time the *Gaddi Collection* was dispersed. Around 1800 F. Caracciolo sold it to Count Miklós Wiczay at Hódmező (Hungary), then to Gabriel Lepoway in 1834, inherited by K. Polak, who sold it in 1837, to 1867 Joseph Mayer left it to the city of Liverpool. **SELECTED REFERENCES:** Polak 1876, nos 27–6; Dehnbach 1929, no. 55, pp. 137–48; Vollbach 1976, no. 55; New York 1979, no. 139; N. A. P. Chabot, *Franckfurt-Main 1876*, no. 102; Klotz 1993, pp. 140–50, with fig. 85; Gibson 1994, nos 5–6, with full earlier bibliography; Connor 1998, pp. 15–44, pls vii and viii.

Asklepios and his daughter Hygieia were two of the great healing figures of Classical Antiquity. According to legend they were granted immortality by Zeus because of their medical skills. The main centre of their cult was Epidauros in the Peloponnese, but it spread across the Greco-Roman world, and included a major temple on the island in the Tiber at Rome from 291 BC.

Asklepios is shown leaning on his main attribute, a staff entwined with a single snake, with a bucranium (ox's skull) below. He is accompanied by his son Telesphoros (a symbol of recovery; his name means 'bringing fulfilment'). Hygieia leans on a tripod (symbol of Apollo), around which another snake is entwined; she offers this one an egg. At her side stands Eros, and other symbols of fecundity and healing appear on the capitals that frame the figures. The blank tabulae at the top of the plaques (and the front of the plinths at the bottom) once held inscriptions which presumably indicated the commissioners of the diptych (fragments of letters are visible in Connor 1998, pl. viii), but this would have been supplemented by whatever was written on the wax on the recessed interior of the diptych. The subject-matter and style of the diptych are overtly classicising, and belong to the brief, self-consciously archaising revival of pagan forms and images that took place in Rome around the year 400 (compare Vollbach 1976, no. 55).

The plaques seem to represent images of antique statues (compare Gibson 1994, pl. viii). This is emphasised by the monumentality of the figures and by the projection of the edges of Asklepios' plinth and the base of his staff over the floral border, the subtle hint of perspective, and the layered depths of carving (receding back to the floral swag above the head of Asklepios). The presentation of the gods as statues may have been an attempt to reassert the power of the cult images, in opposition to Christian attempts to destroy such 'idols' or consign them to galleries. The diptychs may have been issued as part of an appeal for the maintenance of the cult statues

after the withdrawal of public funding from temples in 394 (Zosimus 1982, iv. 59).

ANTHONY EASTMOND

17

### Plaque with Apollo and Daphne

Perhaps from Egypt, fifth or sixth century  
Ivory, 12.2 × 8.8 cm

**PROVENANCE:** Per i Beni Architettonici e Paisaggistici di Ravenna, Museo Nazionale di Ravenna, inv. no. 1001.

**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Vollbach 1976, no. 60, p. 64.

This panel is an example of Late Antique Hellenism within the Christian empire (see Bowersock 1990). It shows Apollo holding a lyre and accompanied by a swan with Eros flying above him, as he approaches Daphne, who is already turning into a bay tree. The imagery celebrates mythological subject-matter, including an ancient deity, in a strikingly Hellenising manner that insists on full-frontal nudity for both figures. None of this appears to have been problematic for a Christian audience, so long perhaps as such items were kept in the domestic sphere (and not used in church). It may be that the only really offensive pagan-related imagery would have been scenes of sacrifice, which are hardly attested at all after the fourth century. Our visual evidence for this kind of iconography in Late Antiquity – which includes textiles, small-scale marble sculpture, silverware and mosaics as well as ivories – extends at least into Middle Byzantium, but relatively little 'secular' work survives from the later period.

JAS' ELSNER

18

### Plaque with Nereid with fruit-filled basket

Egypt, possibly Alexandria, fifth century  
Animal bone, 4.8 × 1.4 cm

**PROVENANCE:** Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 18747. Gift of Louka Benaki.

**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Marangoni 1976, pp. 44, 116, no. 175, pl. 41a; Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, p. 197, no. 377, pl. 84.

The right-hand side of this plaque is broken. It bears a hole for nailing it to a wooden casket, similar to one in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, pl. 14). Caskets were used for the safekeeping of jewellery, documents and other objects, and were buried with their owner in the grave. The principal centre of their production was Egypt, and particularly Alexandria (Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, pp. 57–8), where the largest number of such plaques has been found.

The decorative subject in low relief, which combines incision and carving (Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, pp. 156–65), represents a recumbent female nude with uplifted torso, leaning on her bent right arm and turning her head backwards. She stretches out her left hand,

which holds in check the edge of the *peplos*, towards a basket of fruits in front of her slightly flexed legs.

The figure is a Nereid, a subject from the iconographic cycle of the 'marine *thiasos*', which, together with the 'Dionysian cycle', decorates the group of bone plaques in bas-relief. The subject is linked with the birth of Aphrodite and the daughters of Nereus, the Nereids, who form her retinue. This type of Nereid, which is very widely disseminated in Late Antiquity, is encountered both in monumental art, as on sarcophagi or mosaic pavements, and in the minor arts (Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, pp. 85, 179–80). The spread of the Nereid motif in this period, notwithstanding the prevailing of the Christian religion, is attributed to its propitious symbolism, which is associated with the journey to the Isles of the Blessed, where the Nereids accompanied the mortals and which Christians had linked with Paradise.

KATIA LOVERDOU-TSIGARIDA

19

### The Antioch Chalice

Byzantine, from Syria, possibly Kaper Koraon or Antioch, first half of the sixth century

Silver cup set in footed silver-gilt shell, height 19.7 cm

**PROVENANCE:** Originally said to have been found at Antioch in 1901, also argued to have been found c. 1901 in northern Syria and connected to the Church of St Sergios in the village of Kaper Koraon, restored by Léon Andet, Paris, 1932, owned by the dealer Kouschak Pevry until sold to The Clusters in 1930. **SELECTED REFERENCES:** Eisen 1916, Morey 1925, Jerphanion 1926, Wilpert 1926, Paris 1931, no. 535, p. 115; Pierce and Tyler 1932, Eisen 1935, Renner 1936, London 1977, no. 147, p. 86; New York 1979, no. 542, pp. 606–7 (M. E. Frazer); Baltimore 1986, no. 40, pp. 183–7 (M. Mundell); Mango 1988, Worcester 2000, no. 184, pp. 214–15 (H. Evans); Trier 2007, pp. 380–2 and no. 111.1 (A. Kaufmann-Heinimann and M. Martin).

Formed of a simple silver cup encased within an elaborate inhabited grapevine rinceaux patterned shell, the so-called Antioch Chalice has been an enigmatic work since its discovery at the beginning of the twentieth century (Evans, Holcomb and Hallman 2001, no. 104, pp. 214–15). Originally, the cup was argued to be the Holy Grail used by Christ at the Last Supper with its shell dated to the second half of the first century. The twelve seated figures inhabiting the shell's grape-laden vine were identified as being two of the earliest portraits of Christ and of ten of the Apostles (Eisen 1916, pp. 426–37). The vessel was shown as the Holy Grail at the World's Fair held in Chicago in 1933, although by the 1920s scholars had begun questioning its date (Morey 1925, pp. 73–80; Jerphanion 1926; Wilpert 1926, pp. 110–41; Pierce and Tyler 1932, pp. 69–71). The vessel was exhibited in the first major exhibition on Byzantine art in Paris in 1931 as a fifth-century work and acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a work of that date in 1950.

The vessel is now considered to be a standing lamp of the early sixth century, an identification

supported by stylistic analysis of the images and the resemblance of the shape of the vessel to that of standing lamps of the early sixth-century Sion treasure (New York 1979, no. 542, pp. 606–7 [M. E. Frazer]; Boyd 1988, pp. 191–202). Standing lamps appear on the lintel over the altar in the Rilia Paten (cat. 20). Originally connected with Antioch, the vessel has also been identified with the Church of St Sergios near Kaper Koraon in Syria (Baltimore 1986, no. 40, pp. 183–7; Mundell; Mango 1988, pp. 163–77; London 1977, no. 147, p. 86). The recently discovered, large Early Christian ewer in Trier decorated with an unusual number of men in tunics with clear Christological connections outside of established iconographic concepts emphasises the difficulty in identifying the imagery of unique Early Byzantine objects (Trier 2007, pp. 382–5 with illustrations and no. LII.1 [A. Kaufmann-Heinimann and M. Martin]).

HELEN C. EVANS

20

### Paten with the Communion of the Apostles

Constantinople or Syria, 565–78  
Silver repoussé with gilding and inscription in niello, diameter 35 cm

**PROVENANCE:** Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC. Byzantine Collection, 42.1924.5. **PROVENANCE:** Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss, acquired 1914. **SELECTED REFERENCES:** Rome 1954, no. 10; New York 1979, no. 347, colour plate 100; Schneider 1979, Baltimore 1986, no. 35; Los Angeles 2006, no. 37.

Behind a cloth-covered altar, the cross-nimbed figure of Christ, shown twice, administers the bread on the right and the wine on the left to two groups of Apostles. They stand on either side of the table bearing a chalice, a paten and two wine skins. In the exergue below are more liturgical vessels. The architectural setting controls and unifies the vivid narrative created by the animated Apostles. The two spiral columns that support an architrave with a shell niche mark the 'holy space' – the sanctuary reserved for the two figures of Christ. This symmetrical composition representing the Communion of the Apostles is inscribed into the centre of the paten; the inscription around the rim reads: 'For the peace of the soul of Sergia, daughter of Ioannes, and of Theodosius, and for the salvation of Megalos and Nonnos and of their children.' The control stamps with imperial portraits and monograms on the reverse of the paten are those of Justin II (565–78).

Patens in different sizes were used to display and carry Eucharistic bread. Only a few preserved plates represent the Communion Rite itself. A similar depiction of the Communion of the twelve Apostles is represented on a paten in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

Silver vessels were gifted to fulfil a vow, or, as in the case of this paten, to obtain salvation and commemorate the memory of family members.

GUDRUN BÜHL

21

### Ivory with Archangel

Constantinople, c.525–550  
Ivory, 12.8 × 11.3 × 0.9 cm

**PROVENANCE:** In situ 1876, where already in the British Museum, unknown until 1914. **SELECTED REFERENCES:** Dublin 1902, no. 272; Dublin 1925, no. 11; Delon 1929, p. 209; Vollbach 1976, no. 509; Wright 1977, New York 1979, no. 481 (S. A. Boyd); Cutler 1984a, London 1994, no. 54 (A. Eastmond); Connor 1998, pp. 15–18, fig. 23.

This exquisite ivory leaf of an archangel demonstrates the existence of a classicising, naturalistic style in sixth-century Byzantine art. It is the largest single piece of ivory to survive from Byzantium, and one of the most magnificently carved. The archangel, with a tall sceptre or staff in his left hand, holds out an orb surmounted by a cross in his right. He appears to loom forward in front of the fluted columns on either side, even though he stands on steps that recede behind them: it is a fine visual balance between the materiality of the image and the incorporeal nature of the angel. The image's success lies in the overall grace of the pose and the sensitive drapery folds of the angel, as well as in its many fine details: the patterned cuffs, bows on the sandals and the careful delineation of feathers. These are matched by the intricate carving of the arch over his head and the fluttering ribbons extending from the wreath around the cross.

The archangel would have offered the orb to a second figure, presumably an emperor given its imperial connotations, on the now lost left leaf of this diptych. Close comparisons in the carving technique of this ivory and of those produced for Justinian when he was appointed consul in 521 (Cutler 1984a), and Justinian's known interest in the cult of the Archangel Michael (Cormack 2000a, p. 45), suggest that this was produced for that emperor, possibly on his accession to the throne.

The inscription, a line of iambic trimeter, at the top reads: ΔΕΧΟΙ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΑ / ΚΑΙ ΜΑΘΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΑΙΤΙΑΝ, but its translation is contested: 'Receive this suppliant, despite his sinfulness' (Cormack 2000a, p. 47; implying imperial humility); 'Accept present circumstances, even understanding their essence' (Wright 1977, pp. 7–9, a reference to Justinian's accession in 527); or 'Accept this gift, and having learned the cause' (Cut 1902, p. 55). All hypothesise an image of the emperor, or a second line of text, on the missing leaf to complete the sense of the message.

On the reverse is a fragment of a seventh-century Syrian liturgical text in Greek, which suggests that it was still in the eastern part of the empire at that time.

ANTHONY EASTMOND

22

### Ivory with Adoration of the Magi

Eastern Mediterranean, first half of the sixth century  
Ivory, 21.5 × 12.3 cm

**PROVENANCE:** The Treasury of the British Museum, London, inv. no. 1994.07012. **SELECTED REFERENCES:** Delon 1929, p. 212; Vollbach 1976, no. 110; New York 1979, no. 136 (S. A. Boyd); Schneider 1979, no. 11; Adams 2000, no. 3 (A. Eastmond).

This ivory plaque is dominated by its imposing central figure of the Virgin Mary, cradling the Christ Child on her lap, is much the largest figure; she sits on a backless throne staring out at the viewer, as does her son, who also raises his hand in a gesture of blessing. To either side, the three Magi (supplemented by an angel to maintain the symmetry of the image) enter in their Phrygian robes, offering their gifts in covered hands, but there is little sense of narrative. Although they are now heavily worn, the almost circular eyes of the Virgin and of Christ unblinkingly confront the viewer. They suggest a direct engagement between worshipper and the divine, although the rigid, hieratic composition presents them as figures for veneration rather than intercession. This fits the growing cult of Mary, who, after the third ecumenical council at Ephesus in 431, was acknowledged as the Mother of God.

This symbolic image is paired with a narrative scene below, showing the miracle of Salome: the midwife whose hand withered when she denied the Virgin birth, only to have it restored by holding it up to the Christ Child (the story is recorded in the apocryphal Proteoangelium of James, chapters 19–20, and appears on a number of other sixth-century ivories: Vollbach 1976, nos 127, 140, 174, 199).

The plaque marks a shift in the use of ivory from a material for luxury functional objects (primarily diptychs, pyxides, boxes, book covers) to one suitable for more contemplative worship. It parallels the rise in painted icons for veneration in the sixth century, although the scale of the ivory suggests that it was designed for more individual, personal use. However, the edges of the ivory were subsequently all cut down to allow the plaque to be reused as the centre of a five-part panel (comparable to a dispersed group with similar iconography: New York 1979, nos 457–61).

ANTHONY EASTMOND

23

### Ivory with the Annunciation

Eastern Mediterranean, late seventh or early eighth century  
Ivory, 19.7 × 9.4 cm

**PROVENANCE:** Chiesa Raccolta d'Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan, inv. no. 14. **SELECTED REFERENCES:** Weitzmann 1970, with previous bibliography; Venice 1974, no. 66 (S. Furlani); Zaitsev 1976; Zaitsev 1978, pp. 22–3.

This ivory is not an independent panel but must have functioned, together with a number of other pieces, as revetments on church furnishings. It belongs to a group of about fourteen similarly carved panels which has been dated variably from



the sixth to the eleventh century (see Weitzmann 1972c). A date in the late seventh to early eighth century seems most likely. The Annunciation is among the plaques displaying the highest quality workmanship and its carving style focuses on elegance and fine surface details.

In front of an elaborate and complex architectural setting the Archangel Gabriel, identified by a vertical inscription in raised Greek letters, + ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ, approaches the standing Virgin. Her seat with a curved high back is barely visible between the columns. Gabriel holds a long sceptre in his left hand and addresses the Virgin with his right. The elaborate drapery of his garment and the awkwardly turned left foot conveys his sudden arrival. Mary is also identified by inscription, Η ΓΑΤΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ (Holy Maria or Saint Maria), a form of address that ceases to exist after the ninth century. It is above her head with letters beautifully intertwined to create a decorative openwork pattern. In contrast to Gabriel, the Virgin is depicted in a self-absorbed and contained pose. The hand placed at the side of her head with its long finger along her cheek gives her a pensive and wondering expression. She is tightly draped in a mannered pose.

The attention paid to detail is unusual. The decorative architectural features behind the figures, the angled pediment, the lavish curls of the archangel, the fancy folds and tassels of her mantle all contribute to the preciousness of the piece.

HOLY KALAVREZOU

## 24

Diptych leaf with a Byzantine empress

Sixth century  
Ivory, traces of gilding and paint, 26.5 × 12.7 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Ankäufeausstellung, 1999  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dehnbach 1999, no. 52; Vollbach 1997, no. 52; New York 1979, pp. 31–32; Jantzen 2001, Augustini 2004, pp. 1–15

This panel is part of an imperial diptych and depicts an empress in her majesty. She is seated on a jewelled and cushioned throne with a curved back, holding a *globus cruciger* in her left hand while her right hand is extended sideways, palm outwards. She wears elaborate jewelled robes and a diadem with pendilia. On her robes, the outline of a *tablion* bearing another imperial figure can be distinguished. She is located below a cupola crowned by eagles and supported by pillars, around which curtains are draped.

There is a very similar plaque in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, where the empress stands in the niche. In both cases, she is most commonly identified as Ariadne (before 457–515), daughter of Emperor Leo I and wife of the emperors Zeno and Anastasios, on the basis of perceived similarities with dated consular diptychs of Clementinus, Anastasios and Arcobindus. As a result, a whole series of sculpted anonymous

imperial female heads is also identified as Ariadne. However, images from this period are difficult to identify as physical likeness was not a requisite of portraiture; the images of Ariadne on consular diptychs also resemble those on diptychs of the Empress Theodora, wife of Justinian. The image raises questions about the role and depiction of the Early Byzantine empresses. Her dress, placing and attributes suggest – at least visually – that empresses held considerable power in their own right.

LIZ JAMES

## 25

Ivory diptych

Constantinople, mid-sixth century  
Ivory, each panel 29 × 13 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. 544 and 545  
PROVENANCE: From the Königl. Kunstkammer, Berlin  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vollbach 1976, no. 175, p. 91; Paderborn 1999, no. N.6; Bild 2002; Munich 2004, no. 202, p. 161 (G. Bild)

Both halves of this ecclesiastical diptych have been cropped at the bottom: a remnant of an inscription – a superscript 'C' – recalls the ivory throne of Archbishop Maximian in Ravenna. The style of the images – an aged Christ on the left, flanked by the Apostles, Peter and Paul, and, on the right, the Virgin holding the Christ Child in her lap and flanked by archangels – is likewise very closely related to that of the Ravenna throne, and both objects most probably date from the same time, the mid-sixth century.

The ivory panels belong to the same tradition as the consular diptychs of the fifth and sixth centuries. The latter presentation tablets, given by the annually appointed consuls in both halves of the empire to friends and senators, generally showed the new consul enthroned in a frontal pose on the *sellia curulis* (official chair or stool) with the insignia of his office and often flanked by officials. The diptych with Christ and Mary uses the same visual symbols – an archivolt above columns as a mark of distinction, a curtain in the background, a throne and members of 'court' in attendance – while both contrasting and linking the heavenly ruler in his perfect and mature divinity with the mother of God, Mary, who presents the incarnated son of God as the divine *logos*.

The special appeal of the carving lies in its balance between severe, hard-edged lines and vibrant softness in certain details of the faces and drapery. The relief conveys a remarkable illusion of depth and three-dimensionality, despite a maximum actual depth of 0.3 cm.

The reverse bears the remains of an ink inscription that has been dated to the sixth century and shows saints' names in two columns.

GUDRUN BÜHL

## 26

Ampulla with images of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension

Palestine, sixth century AD  
Pewter (lead and tin alloy), diameter 6.4 cm

Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza, ampolla 10  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Gauthier 1978, Monza no. 10, pp. 26–27; Gauthier 1986, no. 10, pp. 24–25

The sixteen pewter ampullae from the Holy Land now in Monza were filled with holy oil and brought as relics to the West. They belong to a class of Early Christian items called *eulogiae* or 'blessings'. A Jerusalem pilgrim of about 570 AD from Piacenza describes how the oil in such flasks bubbles over as it touches the wood of the True Cross (Wilkinson 2002, p. 139). Although mass-produced and of cheap material, these ampullae were evidently highly prized by the time they arrived in Western Europe: the Monza group was given to the cathedral by the Lombard queen Theodolinda in about 600, while a similar collection now in Bobbio were buried with the body of St Columban. The rich iconography on the ampullae both illustrates Christ's life and evokes directly the specific holy places where pilgrims acquired these *eulogiae*. This example, which shows the Crucifixion and Resurrection (both venerated in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) as well as the Ascension, surely comes from Jerusalem where all these sites were located. The obverse has the Crucifixion with Christ as a bust above the Cross between the sun and moon and the two thieves, as well as Mary and John the Evangelist and two kneeling worshippers beneath. Below this, in a scene inscribed 'the Resurrection of the Lord', are two Marys before the tomb of Christ, beside which sits an angel. The inscription round the circumference reads 'Oil of the wood of life from the holy places of Christ'. On the obverse is a representation of the Ascension.

JAS' ELISNER

## 27

Ampulla with images of the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension

Palestine, sixth century AD  
Pewter (lead and tin alloy), diameter 7 cm

Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza, ampolla 1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Gauthier 1978, Monza no. 1, pp. 16–17; Gauthier 1986, no. 1, pp. 19–20; Elisner 1997

This ampulla shows the Adoration of the Magi (inscribed 'Magi' to the left) and the Shepherds on the obverse, with angels above the Enthroned Virgin and sheep and goats beneath the inscription that forms the ground, which reads in Greek 'Emmanuel, God is with us'. The inscription around the circumference says 'Oil of the wood of life from the holy places of Christ'. The reverse, without an inscription, shows the Ascension with the Virgin between the twelve Apostles below and four angels carrying Christ

in a mandorla above. There is a visual play of the seated Virgin carrying Christ on the obverse against the standing Virgin Orans with Christ enthroned above her in the Ascension. The iconography of the Ascension may be compared with that of cat. 26, but here there is no dove flying down between Christ and Mary, while Christ has long rather than short and curly hair. As collections, the Monza and Bobbio ampullae were carefully selected (perhaps from one larger group) to offer the widest range of iconographies and hence references to scriptural events and holy places in Palestine. Effectively they became a contemplative means to evoke the totality of the Holy Land in north Italy through relics which had actually come from there.

JAS' ELISNER

## 28

Gold pendant with the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension

Eastern Mediterranean, around AD 600  
Gold, diameter (including suspension loop) 6.8 cm

The Treasures of the British Museum, London, inv. 1993.7.4.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lantieri 2005, pp. 267–73, fig. 3

This gold *enkolpion* is constructed of two thin sheets of embossed gold set back to back over a sulphur core. The front is decorated with the Adoration of the Magi, with the three Magi approaching from the left and the Virgin seated on the right, with the infant Christ on her lap. Above is a flying angel and the star of Bethlehem. Below is a Greek inscription: ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΟΗΘΙ ΤΗ ΦΟΡΟΥΣΑ ΑΜΗΝ (Lord protect the wearer. Amen). On the reverse is the Ascension, with Christ in a mandorla supported by four angels above the Virgin, who is flanked by the eleven disciples and St Paul. Below them is a further Greek inscription: ΕΙΡΗΝΗΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΜΗΝ ΑΦΙΟΜΕ ΥΜΙΝ (Our peace we leave with you; John XIV, 27).

This pendant can be grouped with six others of the sixth or early seventh century, all decorated with scenes from the life of Christ (Entwistle 2005, pp. 269–70). The closest example to the above pendant is now unfortunately lost, but is known from a drawing in the Royal Collection at Windsor (Osborne and Claridge 1998, no. 284). Although its obverse side is different – it depicts the Flight into Egypt – the reverse has a very similar depiction of the Ascension, differing only in that four angels support Christ's mandorla and the absence of an inscription. The iconography of the Ascension in particular relates the medallion to both reliquaries and ampullae perhaps produced in the Holy Land for pilgrims around 600. As with rings and marriage-belts, *enkolpia* were also exchanged as gifts at the marriage ceremony, where they seem to have functioned as a confirmation of contract.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 29

Copy from a cast of a now lost gold medallion of Justinian I (527–65)

Mint of Constantinople, 534 (?)–538  
Electrotype, diameter 8.2 cm

The Treasures of the British Museum, London, inv. 1975.1.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Balaban 1967, Wirth 1968, p. 25; Barker 1966, pp. 216–17

The obverse of this medallion shows a bust of Justinian I, three-quarter facing, nimbate, wearing cuirass, *paludamentum*, plumed helmet and diadem. He holds a spear and shield. The inscription reads: ΔΝΙΣΤΙΝΙΑΝΣΡΡΑΥC. On the reverse Justinian I can be seen on horseback, in the same attire as above, preceded by Victory, who carries a palm and trophy. The inscription reads: ΣΑΛΥΣΕΤCΛΟΡΙΑΡΟΜΑΝΟΥΡΥΜ (Welfare and Glory of the Romans); in exergue, CONOB.

This medallion, struck to celebrate the conquest of the Vandal kingdom, weighed 164.05 g and equalled 36 gold *solidi*. Found in 1751 in the area of Caesarea in Cappadocia, it was later acquired by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, from where it was stolen and melted down in 1831. The issue of gold multiples of *solidi* such as this medallion was intended for distribution, mainly to foreign rulers as diplomatic gifts.

EURYDICE S. GEORGANTZELI

## 30, 31, 32

Silver plates with scenes from the life of David

Constantinople, 613–629/30  
Silver, diameter 14 cm, 26.8 cm, 14 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. nos 1.432–54  
PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), 1902  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1911, p. 165, fig. 62; New York 1979, p. 477; Leader-Newby 2004, pp. 311–20

These three silver plates belong to the so-called 'second treasure of Lambousa', which was discovered in two batches on 10 and 12 February 1902. According to oral information, the first treasure consisted of golden objects and was discovered in an earthen pot hidden under a floor. The second treasure consisted of nine silver plates and was found bricked up in a niche of a wall that was presumably part of the remains of the Byzantine city of Lambousa, near the modern town of Kyrenia. At that time, the police managed to confiscate part of the treasure, consisting of the three plates now in the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia. The other six are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The nine plates came in different sizes: a large one showing David and Goliath (diameter 49.4 cm), three of around 28 cm, one of around 27 cm and four of around 14 cm. The David plates show the early life of David as related in I Samuel (in the Septuagint, I Kings, XVI, 12 to XVIII, 27), from David's anointing by Samuel to his fight with Goliath and marriage to Saul's daughter.

In the plate that shows David summoned to Samuel (cat. 30), heaven is represented above with sun, moon and stars. A messenger arrives to summon David, son of Jesse, to meet Samuel. David is playing his lyre and minding sheep. Both figures have haloes, which lend an air of the sacred to the event. The scene is very rarely illustrated in Early Byzantine art. In the plate that shows David slaying a bear (cat. 32), David tells Saul that he will be able to kill Goliath, just as he has killed lions and bears as a shepherd. Both deeds are represented on the David plates, this one showing him mastering the bear. David grabs the fur between the animal's ears, thrusts his knee into its back and prepares to bludgeon it with a tapered, horn-shaped weapon. In the plate depicting the Marriage of David and Michal (cat. 31), David is rewarded for killing Goliath with a dowry (in bags and the basket below) and with marriage to Saul's second daughter; the couple 'join their right hands' according to Byzantine wedding ceremonial. Between them and also haloed is Saul on a footstool and in imperial dress. Two flute players are on each side and the marriage takes place beneath a colonnaded façade.

The group of nine silver plates is a striking example of the continuation – or revival – of Classical naturalistic traditions. But the subject-matter is of course openly Christian and not pagan like the models for this style. Each plate has a low ring base and is executed in low relief. Before the craftsman got to work, each plate was hallmarked in Constantinople with four or five control stamps, which indicate that they were produced as a set during the reign of Herakleios (610–41).

The mystery surrounding these plates is how they came to Cyprus, where it is assumed that they were hidden for safekeeping during some historical crisis (Arab raids?). Their quality and subject-matter have led to the interpretation that the story of David in some way symbolises the reign of Herakleios and that this emperor sent them as a present to an imperial official on the island for use and display in his home. Rather than trying to link each plate with some episode in the life of the emperor, Leader-Newby (2004) instead sees the David story as an allegory of the growth to maturity of the ideal monarch David (the best model for emperors to follow, according to Byzantine rhetoric and writings). In other words, the cycle of plates belongs to the same tradition as Homer's *Odyssey*, in which is narrated the growing to manhood of Telemachus, son of Odysseus. A Byzantine education ensured that elite consumers of high art such as these plates knew their Homer as well as their Bible.

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS



## Silver plate with goatherd, two goats and a dog

Constantinople, c.530 (?)

Chased and incised silver, diameter 23.8 cm; diameter of footing 9 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. 69 277.  
 PROVENANCE: found in the village of Klimovo, Solikamsk Uyezd, region of Perm, 1907, with two Byzantine plates from the seventh century and four Sassanid vessels.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Bink 1979, pp. 229–30, fig. 15; Zaluska 1980, St Petersburg and London 2005, pp. 48–9 (V. Zaluska); Thessaloniki 2005, pp. 310–11 (V. Zaluska); *Leiden-Nieuwe* 2004, p. 176, fig. 4.3; Zaluska 2005, pp. 56–8, note 13; Zaluska 2006.

This plate shows a pastoral scene, with the goatherd deep in contemplation of nature within a fertile landscape. Such scenes are found in Antiquity in the wall paintings of Pompeii and other Campanian sites, such as Paris among the flocks on Mount Ida (now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples). The theme is found in Greek and Roman poetry and continues into Christian literature, such as these verses in a homily of the fourth-century Father Gregory of Nazianzos:

Tormented by profound grief, yesterday I sat sadly  
 Alone in a shady grove, withdrawn from all human company.  
 It pleases me to heal my weariness of spirit in this way.  
 Making quiet conversation with my weeping heart.

This sort of literary continuity from Antiquity into Byzantium is reminiscent of the use in art of the image of the Good Shepherd to evoke Christ.

On the base there are five control stamps from the time of Justinian I (527–65). One of these includes a monogram which can be read as ΠΕΤΡΟΥ. This man was probably the state official in Constantinople who had a supervisory role over the use of silver, the so-called *comes sacrarum largitionum*. These officials used the five stamps to authenticate the quality of the silver and perhaps to signify that the necessary fees had been paid by the producer. They held office for only a short period, some two or three years. The form of the monogram suits a date early in the reign of Justinian and it may belong to 530–32.

VERA ZALUSKAYA

## 34

## Chalice with four Apostles and the Cross

Syria, c.530–75

Chased silver with traces of partial gilding, height 16.8 cm; diameter of cup 14 cm; diameter of foot 9.5 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. 57 691.  
 PROVENANCE: discovered in Syria, 1908–10; purchased by Towfic Al-Basman, Hama and Port Said, c.1913; purchased by Joseph Brummer, Paris, c.1918; purchased by Henry Walters, Baltimore, 1929; bequeathed to the Walters Art Gallery (now Walters Art Museum), 1931.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Diehl 1926, p. 107, pl. xxxviii; New York 1959, no. 330, pp. 299–300 (H. Buchsbaum); Baltimore 1986, no. 3, pp. 47–52 and 74–7; C.E. Howe, T. Dreyman Weiner and M. Mandel Mango, with bibliography, *Walters Art Museum* 1991, pp. 236–7 and 248; RBK, vol. 2, col. 198 (E. Dinkler and E. Dinkler-von Schöner); Elfenberger 1991, pp. 230–1.

Hidden during the last Byzantine war with Persia (Elfenberger 1991, p. 264), this chalice was unearthed together with 24 other silver objects (Baltimore 1986, p. 25) and perhaps comes from an even larger hoard. Its surface is noticeably worn by use. All associated pieces seem made for

a church; most carry Greek dedicatory inscriptions. The one here reads: 'Prayer of Pelagios, [son of] Basianos. Sacred vessel of Saint Sergios in the village of Kaper Koraon.' Inexpertly written with a pointed instrument, this text must have been added after manufacture. Kaper Koraon is probably present-day Kurin in Syria, so the chalice may have been produced in the nearby city of Antioch. Unlike many Early Byzantine precious vessels, the piece does not carry government-control stamps that guarantee the purity of its metal. Still, the silver invested in it could have bought a camel at the time (Mundell Mango 1992, p. 133). The donor Pelagios was probably related to several persons named on other objects from the hoard. His hypothetical genealogy suggests he lived shortly after 550 (Elfenberger 1991, p. 277).

This is one of the few pieces from Kaper Koraon to include figural decoration. Typically of Early Byzantine religious art (Maguire 1996, pp. 100–6), the saints depicted are unnamed. Three hold books that generally identify them as Apostles, while the fourth appears to be St Peter (LCI, vol. 8, cols 161–2). Contemporary chalices (Elbern 2004) and censers (Piguet-Panayotova 1998a) have Christ's image centrally placed on one side and the Virgin's on the other. Here, the Saviour is symbolically represented by two crosses (see RBK, vol. 5, cols 30–1). Instead of the person of our Lord, [the holy Church] places the Cross and the Gospel on the altar', explains a seventh-century Syriac text (Brock 2003, § 46).

GEORGI K. PAPPULOV

## 35

## The Emesus Vase

Constantinople or Syria (?), end of the sixth century  
Silver, 45 × 27 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, B1 0915.  
 PROVENANCE: Horn (formerly Emesus), Syria. Gift of J. A. Darghelle, 1862.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Héron de Villefosse 1892; Baltimore 1986, no. 84, pp. 255–6; Metzger 1986, Paris 1992, no. 62, p. 115; Rome 2000c, no. 74, p. 201, pl. 3.151.

The Emesus Vase is made from a sheet of hammered silver and is unusual because of its size: it is the largest-known example of a precious metal container from pre-iconoclastic Byzantium. Its decoration uses the technique known as repoussé; the details, however, have been engraved or incised on the exterior face of the metal. The base of the neck and the foot are accentuated by a strapwork design, which is repeated above and below the band of decoration that encircles the central bulge of the vase.

Eight half-length figures, lightly embossed in the same sheet of silver, occupy eight medallions placed at regular intervals, and are separated by a Classical motif consisting of a horn emerging from a clump of acanthus and framed by leaves which form volutes. Christ, bearded and with long hair,

holds the Gospels and has his hand raised in blessing. The Apostles Peter and Paul stand beside him, turned three-quarter face towards him. The Virgin Mary, veiled, is placed symmetrically opposite, flanked by two archangels. The two last figures have been identified as John the Baptist, the older man, and John the Evangelist, holding the Gospels. Although this design of busts placed in medallions to form a frieze is found quite frequently on liturgical objects of this period, such as chalices, reliquaries and censers, the stylistic treatment of the busts on the Emesus Vase is of remarkable quality and displays an undeniable mastery of technique. Particularly noteworthy is the individualisation of each figure and the subtle handling of facial expressions.

The function and origins of this exceptional piece remain an enigma, however. The smallness of the pouring spout, which is completely out of proportion with the size of the vase, the hypothetical presence of a handle, of which nothing but a few traces on the neck remain, and the vase's unusually large dimensions – and thus its weight – make any functional use unlikely. Rather than a liturgical vase intended to contain Eucharistic wine, perhaps the object should be seen as a luxurious gift donated by one of the faithful to a church in the context of the creation of a treasury. Nevertheless, the absence of an inscription that would usually commemorate such a generous gift is surprising, as is the lack of a stamp or hallmark, which makes manufacture in an imperial workshop unlikely.

CÉCILE GIROIRE

## 36

## Censer

Constantinople, 602–10  
Silver, diameter 10.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1899 0435.  
 PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), Cyprus.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Dailon 1961, no. 399; Doid 1961, no. 35; Athens 1964, no. 491; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 61; London 1977, no. 176; New York 1979, no. 582.

This hexagonal censer, once suspended by three chains now lost, rests on a foot-ring within which are five imperial control stamps of the Emperor Phokas (602–10). The censer is decorated on its six sides with bust portraits of Christ, flanked by those of St Peter and St Paul, and of the Virgin, flanked by those of St John the Evangelist and St James. On other objects, the Virgin is often flanked by archangels. A series of busts in medallions or single figures standing under arcades are more common as decoration on Late Antique religious silver than narrative compositions.

Censers were used to perfume both cult and secular settings. While most Byzantine censers (both standing and suspended) are made of bronze, an interesting series in silver survives in both round and polygonal forms. The latter

includes two other hexagonal censers, both with control stamps of Maurice (582–602) and decorated with six standing figures (Piguet-Panayotova 1998a, pp. 639–46). The Cyprus example may be the smallest silver censer surviving from the period, standing only 6 cm high. Silver censers are normally decorated with Christian subjects.

This censer belongs to the first Cyprus treasure whose other objects are domestic. Within this overall context, the censer may represent the type of Christianised domestic object discussed in relation to the serving plate (cat. 44) and bowl (cat. 45) found with it, or it may have been used in a household chapel.

MARIELA MUNDÉLL MANGO

## 37

## Silver pyxis with Christ, the Virgin and Archangels

Eastern Mediterranean (Syria), Early Byzantine period,  
sixth–seventh century  
Silver with gilding, 7 × 9 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of George D. and Margot Beltrakis in honour of John J. Hermann, Jr., Curator of Classical Art 1976–2004, 2005, 2006.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Thoma 2000, *Minchev* 2003, no. 29, p. 38; Grossmann, Leitz and Kondoleon 2006, p. 52.

This small spherical vessel (pyxis) was made by hammering a thin sheet of silver into the desired form and then polishing while spinning on a wheel, a standard technique of Syrian silversmiths. Four standing figures in relief, each accented with gilding, encircle the vessel. Flanking the Virgin and Christ are a pair of archangels dressed in military costumes, in the manner of court guards, and each holding a staff and an orb marked by a cross. Christ, long-haired and bearded, gestures in blessing with his right hand, while in his left he holds the Holy Gospels. The Virgin, who is rarely depicted on Early Byzantine silver, holds a disk-like object with a cross in her hands, similar to crossed disks found in sixth- and seventh-century paintings decorating Christian funerary chapels in Egypt (Thomas 2000, fig. 90). This unusual object might symbolise the incarnation, referring to the virginal birth of Christ and reflecting the growing status of Mary as the Mother of God.

The pyxis belongs in style and technique to a group of silver containers produced in Syria for well-to-do Christians living in this prosperous and stable region during the Early Byzantine period. A lid, now lost, would have covered the vessel, protecting its sacred contents, either incense used in the liturgy or perhaps a small piece of a saintly relic. Such objects served as votives, prayers made in the form of precious gifts to local churches and monasteries, entreating Christ and the Virgin to act as intercessors between the donors and the court of heaven. The excavation of a similar spherical silver reliquary at a site in modern-day Bulgaria (Minchev 2003, cat. 29, p. 38) raises the

possibility that portable containers made by Syrian craftsmen carried sacred relics across the Mediterranean.

CHRISTINE KONDOLION

## 38.1, 38.2

## Medallion with the Virgin and Child, the Nativity, the Adoration and the Baptism and a braided chain

Constantinople, late sixth century  
Gold, diameter of medallion 3.2 cm;  
diameter of chain 32.5 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC. Byzantine Collection, nr 1955, no. 1–2.  
 PROVENANCE: found near Kyrenia, Cyprus, 1961; Josef Strzygowski, Vienna.  
 Walter Strzygowski, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington DC, 1955.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Strzygowski 1915, pp. 196–198, pl. 1; Strzygowski 1917, pp. 14–15; Smith 1928, p. 81; Vollbach 1941, p. 12; Strzygowski 1949, p. 202, fig. 192; Strzygowski 1951, p. 28, pl. 6; Metzger 1986, pp. 171–81, fig. 8; Ross 1992, *Deacon*, Vollbach 1998, no. 248, p. 93; Talbot-Baer 1999, p. 302; Klauener 1996, v. 2, col. 287; Beckwith 1981, p. 58, fig. 60; Grossmann 1981, pp. 221–4; Buchsbaum 1986, p. 268, n. 152; Adams 1984, no. 199, p. 269; Ross 1989, no. 36, pp. 33–5, colour pl. xxviii, xxix; A. Dumbarton Oaks 1967, no. 481, p. 37; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, pp. 45–51, figs 33–4; London 1977, no. 192, pp. 195; New York 1979, no. 285, pp. 312–13; Karpf 1986, v. 3, pp. 121–36, fig. 39; Neuhäuser 1995, pp. 60, 63; Metzger 1996, p. 56.

The obverse of this medallion shows the Virgin and Child enthroned between angels, with small representations of the Nativity and the Adoration beneath. Just inside the braided frame, an inscription reads Χ(ΡΙ)ΣΤ(Ο)Σ Θ(Ε)Ο(Σ) ΗΜΩΝ / ΒΟΗΘΕΙΩΝ ΗΜΙΝ (Christ, our God, help us). The reverse side narrates the Baptism of Christ. John places his hand on Christ's head, as the dove of the Spirit descends and two angels approach with towels. God's hand appears at the top, the iconic counterpart to the inscription, + ΟΥΤΟC ΕCΤΙΝ Ω ΥΕΙΟC ΜΟΥ/ΑΓΑΠΗΤΟC ΕΝ Ω ΕΥΔΟΚΗCΑ (This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; Matthew 17, 17). In the water below, two excited male figures emerge from shells while a third reclines with an urn and waves a reed in amazement. These figures are personifications of the Ior and the Dan (the two sources of the Jordan River; Ross 1965, p. 33) and the Sea, recalling a verse in the Psalms that Christians associated with the Baptism: 'The sea saw it, and fled; Jordan was driven back' (Psalm cxiv, 3). The theme of divine epiphany unites the two sides, God revealing himself to the magi on the obverse, and to John the Baptist on the reverse.

Strzygowski, who once owned this piece, thought it was produced in the region of Jerusalem, because the events occurred at pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land (Strzygowski 1915, p. 96). Considering the method of fabrication – it was struck like a coin rather than cast – and the Constantinopolitan origins of objects from the same archaeological context, Marvin Ross reattributed it to the capital (Ross 1957). Ross went on to relate the style to coins minted by Maurice Tiberios (582–602) and even the choice of the Baptism to the celebration of the baptism of Maurice's son and heir apparent Theodosios in 583 or 584.

JOHN HANSON

## 39

## Amulet

Sixth or seventh century  
Gold, diameter 1.95 cm

The Hebrew Museum of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, inv. 875.  
 PROVENANCE: found Kratigos, Mytilene, Lesbos.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Vassinos 1954, p. 127, no. 1, fig. 1; Athens 1964, no. 398, p. 364; Spier 1987, no. 7, p. 9, fig. 7a,b; Thessaloniki 1997a, no. 226, p. 199; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 143, no. 6b, fig. 14; Tsougaroglou and Chalkia forthcoming.

The amulet is in the form of a small disc, defined by a thin, slightly everted band. One face is decorated with a relief cross, the uneven arms of which have flaring ends, while the interstices are filled with incised schematic acanthus leaves. The disc is surrounded by a granulated border, at the top of which is attached a wide ring for hanging the amulet. On the other face is a mount (diameter 1.35 cm), defined by a very thin frame of lapis lazuli, now broken into small pieces. The mount obviously held a precious stone or a cameo, as in some of the known amulets of the same type (see Spier 1987, nos 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, p. 6, figs 1a–c, 2a–b, 3, 4a–b, 6a–b; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 144, no. 6b, 6b.5, with bibliography). In amulet-pendants like this one from the Kratigos treasure, the obverse has a precious stone or cameo, while the reverse is decorated with a cross.

EUGENIA CHALKIA

## 40

## A pair of gold earrings

Constantinople (?), sixth or seventh century  
Gold, length 7.5 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. 1 438.  
 PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), second treasure, 1962.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Dailon 1961, p. 11, figs 7a, b; Perides 1971, p. 53, pl. xxxviii.

To each plain gold loop are soldered four small rings, each supporting a pendant consisting of a fine loop-in-loop chain terminating in a pearl. These earrings are part of the two Lambousa treasures found in 1902, which in all give a picture of a household of significant luxury living outside Constantinople in the sixth or early seventh century. It is very likely that the household was an imperial appointment to the island and formed part of the aristocracy of Constantinople. Alternatively, the treasure might indicate the possible environment of luxury that a provincial family on a prosperous island could enjoy.

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS

## 41

## Chain ornament and coin

Constantinople (?), sixth–seventh century  
Gold, length 29 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. 1 439.  
 PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), second treasure, 1962.  
 SELECTED REFERENCES: Dailon 1961, fig. 7; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 50, fig. 39; Perides 1971, p. 54, pl. xxxviii.

This gold chain is composed of loops connected to



each other with figure-of-eight-shaped links. At one end is a leaf-shaped finial, which was probably suspended from an ornament, but this was not found. The clasp on the other end does not belong to the chain; it consists of a *solidus* of Justin II and Tiberios II struck in Constantinople in 578. This is another piece from the rich Lambousa treasure, which was collected together in a house in Lambousa in the early seventh century and subsequently (perhaps in 653 or 654) buried for safekeeping; it was only recovered in 1902.

PAYLOS FLOURENTZOS

## 42

### Silver plate with cross

Constantinople, 613–629/30  
Silver, diameter 36.8 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. 3. 436  
PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), 1902  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dodd 1961, no. 54, p. 170; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 40, fig. 30

This large, flat silver plate has a niello cross at the centre, surrounded by a floral wreath. Found in 1902 as part of the second Lambousa treasure, it is another piece that reveals the range of materials and luxury of this hidden treasure.

The study and dating of Byzantine silver plates and their decoration was revolutionised in the course of the twentieth century, notably by the studies of Leonid Matsulevich in 1929 of the holdings of the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and by the systematic work of Erica Cruikshank Dodd in London, who was greatly helped in her catalogue of silver stamps by the presence in London in 1958 of objects from Russia for the exhibition of Byzantine art at the Victoria and Albert Museum (her London doctorate was finished in 1958 and published in 1961). This work gave a chronology for Early Byzantine silver and proved that there was no gradual 'decline' from Classical styles and workmanship in the Middle Ages. On the contrary, some of the pieces which are the most 'Classical' in style are among the latest produced. The sequence of date-stamped silver comes to an end in the seventh century, but this is for historical and not aesthetic reasons. The Persian wars of Herakleios (610–41) drained the treasury and from 621 he was in such financial difficulties that he called in all the treasures from every church in the capital and melted them down to use for silver coins to pay the army. After this disruption the stamping system fell into disuse, even when churches could begin to replenish their treasuries.

Not all Byzantine silver plates are stamped, and unstamped pieces can only now be dated by style. Those that were stamped usually had five hallmarks, giving the names of the emperor and imperial official at the treasury, among other information. This example is unusual in having at

least seven stamps, some of which are very worn. This suggests that it was stamped on two separate occasions, perhaps because it was sent back to the workshop for re-authentication, possibly due to a change in ownership. The stamps show that it belongs in the reign of Herakleios.

PAYLOS FLOURENTZOS

## 43

### Silver plate with cruciform monogram

Constantinople, 602–10  
Silver, diameter 44.2 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. 3. 435  
PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), 1902  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dodd 1961, no. 55, p. 170; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 47, fig. 31

This large silver plate has a central wreath of leaves and a monogram in niello framed by two gilded bands. It is another piece from the second Lambousa treasure. Date stamps on the reverse date it to the reign of Phokas (602–10). The stamps include the name of Athanasios, who was *comes sacrarum largitionum* up to 605, when he was killed by Phokas. This official, the Master of the Sacred Largesse, was in charge of the imperial finances. He controlled all the mints, and was responsible for collecting taxes and customs duties, and supervised state factories, trade and mines, budgets for the civil service and the army, and supplied all uniforms. The title dates from the sixth century and tenure of the office was (prudently) kept short, to two or at most three years. The system of silver stamps lapsed from the middle of the seventh century, as also, apparently, did the organisation of the treasury in this form.

One problem in interpreting silver with date stamps from Constantinople is whether all such plates were decorated there or whether the stamped pieces were taken to workshops in other parts of the empire, such as the cities of Asia Minor, to be worked. Examination shows that in this plate, as in others, the relief decoration was carried out after the stamps had been applied (they are in part obliterated by this decoration).

PAYLOS FLOURENTZOS

## 44

### Silver plate with cross

Constantinople, 578–82  
Silver with niello inlay, diameter 26.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1869.0425.1  
PROVENANCE: Lambousa, Cyprus  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no. 392; Dodd 1961, no. 48; London 1977, no. 173; London 1994, no. 98

This plate, having a concave surface, is a *lanx*. It has a rounded outer rim and stands on a low foot-ring. Its central medallion, composed of concentric gilded bands, encloses an ivy scroll encircling a Latin cross, both inlaid with niello. On the reverse, inside the footring, are five

imperial control stamps of Tiberios II Constantine (578–82). This plate forms part of the first Cyprus treasure found at the end of the nineteenth century that also includes spoons (cats 101, 102), a censer (cat. 36) and a bowl (cat. 45).

This type of silver plate with a small central cross differs from a church paten, which has a flat inner surface, sloping vertical walls and a large engraved central cross, usually surrounded by an ecclesiastical dedicatory inscription. This *lanx* belongs to the largest category of domestic silver, namely serving or dinner plates made in three general sizes (large, medium, as here, and small). The central ornament on this type of plate varies, and can be a monogram, a cross, a rosette or other motif. The cross motif may be viewed as a Christian element introduced into the domestic sphere where it is also seen on other objects of everyday use (Engemann 1972). In its present position, the cross can also be compared to the owner's cruciform monogram, which, for example, adorns other plates. Serving plates occur frequently in domestic silver treasures within the empire and have often been found singly outside it.

MARILYN MUNDELL MANGO

## 45

### Bowl with portrait of a saint

Tarsus (?), 641–51  
Silver, niello inlay, diameter 24.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1869.0425.2  
PROVENANCE: Lambousa, Cyprus  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no. 391; Dodd 1961, no. 38; Vollbach 1961, p. 269; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 61; London 1977, no. 175; New York 1979, no. 493; London 1994, no. 99

The bowl stands on a flaring foot and has an upper horizontal rim ornamented in relief. Inside the bowl is decorated with a half-length portrait of a saint encircled by a niello-inlaid frieze of overlapping circles between two wave patterns. Underneath the bowl, inside the foot-ring, are five imperial control stamps of Constans II (641–68), apparently applied at Tarsus.

The nimbed saint holds a cross in his right hand. He is beardless and has tightly curled hair. He wears a tunic and chlamys, the latter held by a cross-bow fibula. Around his neck is the *manakion*, the torque of the palace guard. The saint portrayed is often identified as Sergios, martyred with Bacchos in fourth-century Syria. The bowl lacks any inscription either identifying the saint or dedicating the object itself to a church. It has been suggested that the bowl recalls the story of two silver plates commissioned in Alexandria by Eutropius. One, inscribed with his own name, he offered to the Church of St Menas. The other, inscribed with the name of St Menas, he was to use for meals at home until his death, when it was to be presented to the same church. In the present case, the object has the portrait rather than the name of a saint. As with the silver

serving plate found with it (cat. 44), the bowl represents the introduction of Christian elements into the domestic sphere.

MARILYN MUNDELL MANGO

## 46

### Mummy panel with the portrait of a woman

Hawara, 55–70  
Encaustic on thin panel of limewood, 40.5 × 22.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1871.0716  
PROVENANCE: excavated in 1911  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Donnelly 1905, no. 48, p. 200; Cormack 1992, especially pp. 6, 24; London 1996, no. 17, pp. 41–4

This is a portrait of a woman living in Roman Egypt and is naturalistic in style – but that does not mean it must be a 'realistic' likeness of a sitter rather than a conventional portrait type. She wears gold ball earrings, a gold chain with a pendant crescent and (originally) an ornamental chain across her hair – all jewellery familiar from portraits of the third quarter of the first century. Her face fills the panel and her eyes are large and rounded with arched eyebrows.

Traces of mummy wrappings at the arched upper corners demonstrate that the panel was designed to be inserted into a mummy containing her embalmed body. This is one of the earliest in date of around 500 portraits excavated in pits at cemeteries in Hawara (south-east Fayum). They represent the better-off among the Greek-speaking men and women who lived and died there, and who adopted Egyptian funeral practices. The panels are painted, using either wax encaustic (as in this case) or egg tempera.

Such panels from Roman Egypt are often regarded as the source of the Byzantine icon, and there are clear connections in style between these portraits and early icons (such as cats 47, 313, 314). But the evidence is that panel paintings of humans and pagan gods were made all around the Mediterranean, both for domestic and sacred display, and that, in the wall paintings of the houses of Pompeii, portraiture was included among the imagery. The development of the icon emerges from the practices of Greco-Roman art rather than simply the funerary practices of Egypt (the production of Fayum portraits stopped in the mid-third century). The evidence of icons from the Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai is that encaustic continued in use until the eighth century, but was then almost entirely abandoned (the skills of encaustic painting were perhaps the casualties of iconoclasm).

ROBIN CORMACK

## 47

### Icon with Virgin and Child

Rome or Constantinople, around 610  
Paint on elm, 100 × 47.5 cm

Basilica di Santa Maria di Monteverde, Rome  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Berthel 1961, De Blauw 1993, Rome 1993a, no. 36, pp. 61–62; M. Andriani, with bibliography, *Berk* 2003, *East* 2004

The icon is a fragment of what may originally have been a monumental image of the Virgin and Child, perhaps 240 cm high and 85 cm in width. Examples of such standing figures of the Virgin are found in the Rabbula Gospels (painted in Syria in 586) or the seventh-century mosaic apse at Kiti, Cyprus. The right hand of the Virgin is gilded, according to a devotional practice which is also found in sixth-century mosaics at St Demetrios at Thessaloniki and, slightly later, in Durrës (Cormack 1985, p. 84), as well as in the Haghiostorissa icon from the Monasterium tempuli in Rome. As a work from the city of Rome when the capital of the 'Roman Empire' was Constantinople, it hardly makes sense to establish whether this icon is 'Roman' or 'Byzantine', as it is perfectly aligned with the religiosity of its times. For lack of positive comparisons, style cannot answer the question, even if at least the monumentality of this icon, as well as of the earlier sixth-century Madonna from Santa Maria Antiqua (now in Santa Francesca Romana), seems a specific character of the Roman images, unchanged in Constantinople (but see Brenk 2003).

More certain is the function of this monumental icon. It was made for worship in the newly converted Pantheon at Rome. Previously a temple built by Hadrian in honour 'of all the gods', the Pantheon was reconsecrated around 610 as a church dedicated to the 'ever-virgin Mary and all the martyrs'. This information comes from the life of Pope Boniface IV (608–15) in the *Liber Pontificalis*, which records that he asked the Emperor Phokas (602–10) for the temple and that the emperor presented many gifts to the new church (*The Book of the Pontiffs [Liber Pontificalis]*, translated with an introduction by Raymond Davis, Liverpool, 1989, p. 64). The conversion of the Pantheon is also recorded by Bede: 'After Boniface had expelled every abomination from it, he made a church of it dedicated to the Holy Mother of God and all the martyrs of Christ, so that, when the multitudes of devils had been driven out, it might serve as a shrine for a multitude of saints' (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford, 1994, vol. 2, p. 4).

It is very likely that the Christianisation of the Pantheon was sealed by the presence of the icon, while its origins may either point to an import from Constantinople (as a gift from the emperor) or to Rome. It dates therefore between 608 and 610 (though for a date in 613 see De Blauw 1994).

VALENTINO PAGE

## 48

### Silk with the Annunciation

Syria (?), c. 800  
Serge silk in five colours, 33.6 × 68.7 cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, inv. no. 64291  
PROVENANCE: from the Treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Lateran, Rome  
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1981, no. 35, pp. 102–3 (M. E. Frasier); Vicenza 2003, pp. 186–7, no. 43 (G. Corbelli)

This piece of fabric, with a few others of the same provenance, are all that remain of the fabulous gifts in silk and other luxury fabrics presented to the churches of Rome by the series of popes who were born in the Eastern Mediterranean in the seventh and eighth centuries. One surviving fragment bears the identical composition twice, an Annunciation between *rotae* superimposed and joined by knots, linked together by stylised plant elements. With its companion piece, decorated with a Nativity, it probably constituted a single piece of clothing; they were discovered with other similar examples in the Treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Lateran in 1905. At the time of discovery, the fabric bearing the Annunciation was covering the inside of the silver casket, now also in the Museo Cristiano, and identified with the reliquary containing the *sandalia id est calciamenta Domini nostri Iesu Christi* mentioned in the sources (Giovanni Diacono, *De ecclesia Sancti Laurentii in palatio*, in Lauer 1906, pp. 28–9; see Grisar 1907, pp. 136–3, 177–9).

The silks show the influence of Byzantium. Seated on a richly jewelled throne, covered by a pearl-encrusted cushion, Mary is busy spinning the purple wool from which the veil of the Temple will be woven. The fabric decorated with the Annunciation and its twin with the Nativity have been the subjects of heated debate regarding the date and the stylistic area to which they belong. Alexandria or Syria or Constantinople are most often proposed, with dates fluctuating between the sixth and the ninth centuries. But historical and stylistic considerations seem to lead the place of manufacture back to Syria: evidence in the *Liber Pontificalis* relating to the papacy of Leo III (795–816) relates how this pope presented a piece of cloth with identical characteristics to the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe in Ravenna: *habentem in medio crucem de chrisolabo cum orbiculis et rotas stricas habentes stipes Adunatione seu Natale Domini nostri Iesu Christi* (*Liber Pontificalis* 1955, II, pp. 31–2, no. 420). The years to which the testimony of the *Liber Pontificalis* relates are the same as the years of the foundation and first formation of the Lateran Treasury, so it is likely that the fabrics were woven at a similar date and the various fragments were placed inside the reliquaries in which they were found at the same time.

GUIDO CORNELI



## Gospel according to St Matthew, folio 10v

Syria or Palestine, second half of sixth century  
Manuscript on parchment, 30 x 25 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, suppl. Gr. 1206  
PROVENANCE: bought in Sinop in 1847; Bibliothèque nationale, 1900  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Oulton 1901; Grabar 1948; Paris 1978, no. 1;  
New York 1979, no. 442; Paris 1992, no. 57, p. 143; Vatican 2000, pp. 125–9

The 43 folios known as the 'Codex Sinopensis' were acquired in the town of Sinop on the shores of the Black Sea by a French officer at the end of the nineteenth century. They contain fragments of St Matthew's Gospel written in gold ink on purple parchment. Five of the folios bear miniature paintings at the bottom of the page; these are placed in the space allotted in the non-illustrated pages to the last line of the text and the lower edge of the page. They depict Herod's feast, and four miracles of Jesus, including the first and second miracle of the loaves and fishes, the healing of the two blind men of Jericho and the miracle of the withered fig tree. Each scene is framed by two characters from the Old Testament unfurling a scroll in front of them. On each scroll is inscribed the Old Testament text relating to the episode represented.

There is no direct evidence that would allow us to date the execution of this luxurious manuscript with any certainty, or to guess where it was made. It is possible nevertheless to suggest comparisons with two other illustrated Greek biblical manuscripts executed on purple parchment. The placing of the miniature paintings in a band across the whole width of the page recalls the presentation of the miniatures in the Vienna Genesis. The emphatic representation of biblical figures can also be found in the Codex purpureus Rossanensis (the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark) in which most of the New Testament scenes are introduced by four figures from the Old Testament placed at a lower level. The palaeographic characteristics of the Codex Sinopensis and of the two manuscripts quoted above suggest that they came from the same centre, in other words the same Syrian or Palestinian scriptorium in the second half of the sixth century.

CHRISTIAN FÖRSTEL

## 50

Psalter with Christ praying and with the Crucifixion and an iconoclast, folio 67r

Constantinople, soon after 843  
Parchment, 21 x 17.5 cm

The State Historical Museum, Moscow, GIM 66993; Khud. 129-6  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sopkova 1977; New York 1997, no. 54, pp. 197–8  
(K. Corrigan)

This manuscript, known as the Khudov Psalter after the name of the Russian scholar who brought it from Mount Athos to Moscow in 1847, contains the psalms in the Septuagint version; in

the margins of the pages it has 209 miniatures on 159 folios. The text was originally written in uncials (majuscule) with 23 lines to a page and with liturgical headings that have been identified as correct for the services of St Sophia at Constantinople; by the twelfth century most of the text had faded and was overwritten in minuscules.

An immense amount of attention was given to the illustrations, which are like a visual commentary on the psalms, sometimes literal, sometimes highly evocative. A number of the illustrations allude directly to iconoclasm, and since they refer to the triumph of the iconophiles, they are best dated to the years immediately after 843. Various suggestions have been made about possible sponsors of this well-used manuscript, the most favoured candidates both being Patriarchs of Constantinople, Methodios (843–47) or Photios (858–67 and 877–86). According to a note in the manuscript, it was on the island of Chalce, near Constantinople, in 1648.

Folios 66v and 67r give a prime example of the principles followed by the designer of the book. On the left page, verse 18 (17) of Psalm LXXVIII (LXXIX) is highlighted with a blue marker: 'Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress, make haste to answer me.' This is interpreted as a reference to Christ, who is shown (also with a marker) praying in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest (the reference is clinched with a label in Greek (on the Passion of the Lord). On the right page the text marker is to verse 22 (21): 'They gave me gall and vinegar.' This is illustrated with the Crucifixion and Christ's persecutors (the inscription says, 'they mixed vinegar and gall'). This image is then glossed with a second one, 'Iconoclasts mixed water and lime on his face'. The figure whitewashing an icon of Christ is in the portrait type of the iconoclast patriarch John the Grammarian (837–43). The moral is that iconoclasts are as evil as those who taunted Christ on the Cross, a piece of strong visual polemic.

ROBIN GORMACK

## 51

Psalter with Crucifixion, iconoclasts and simoniac priests, folio 87v–88r

Monastery of St John Studios, Constantinople, 1066  
Parchment, 24.8 x 25.5 cm

The British Library, London, Add. 16334  
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1997, no. 53, pp. 68–9 (J. C. Anderson); Barber 2000

This book with the Psalms and Odes in the order of the Septuagint, known as the Theodore Psalter, has a colophon (fol. 208r) with detailed information about its production. It was written by the scribe, the priest Theodore from Caesarea, at the order of the abbot Michael of the famous Monastery of St John Studios, and finished in February 6574 (= 1066). Lowden (in Barber 2000)

makes the case for Theodore being also the artist. The aim of this luxury book with 435 miniatures and lavish use of gold was to promote the monastery, its famous iconophile Abbot Theodore the Studite (759–826) and its present abbot Michael too. Directly, or through a copy of it, the designer of the psalter knew the miniatures of the Khudov Psalter (cat. 50), and often adapts its miniatures, while adding many more images of monastic saints and implying through his prominence that Theodore the Studite was the prime mover against iconoclasm.

The opening on folios 87v and 88r shows its reuse of the visual commentary found in the Khudov Psalter at Psalm LXXVIII (LXXIX). On the left, verse 22 (21), 'They gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink', is illustrated with the Crucifixion. The facing page has two iconoclasts in action as the mirror image. The text is verse 26 (27): 'because they persecuted him whom you have smitten; and they have added to the grief of my wounds'. Below this polemical picture is another one of iconoclasts, shown as simoniacs (open to bribery and corruption like Simon Magus in the Gospels). Their text is verse 27 (28): 'Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.'

This imagery shows that even two centuries after the end of iconoclasm its trauma was recalled for the monks of the Stoudios monastery as a case where Orthodoxy had triumphed over heresy. The twist in the story here is that monks are given a major role in the struggle, as is also the case in the British Museum icon with the Triumph of Orthodoxy (cat. 57).

ROBIN GORMACK

## 52

The Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke

Constantinople (?), early ninth century  
Cloisonné enamel, silver, silver-gilt, gold, niello, 10.3 x 7.1 cm

Loan by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (7.190.752A, B)

PROVENANCE: by tradition, Pope Innocent IV (Sindbad's Fieschi, d. 1254), from a member of his family who brought it home from the Crusades; by tradition, Innocent IV wore it and then dedicated the relic to the Church of San Salvatore di Lavagna, near Genoa, in 1245; relic container retained by the Fieschi family or passed to the family in 1798, when the church became a parish church; reliquary case by descent to Countess Thelung, sold by her, Genoa, 1889; collection of Freiherr Albert von Oppenheim, Cologne; collection of J. Pierpont Morgan (see Dalton 1922, pp. 65–9; Williamson 1913, pp. 299–301); gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917.

National Archaeological Institute and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, inv. no. 4884

PROVENANCE: Pliska, capital of the first Bulgarian kingdom, seventh to ninth century; found in 1973 during excavations in the western sector of its fortress wall, 1973

SELECTED REFERENCES: Doncheva-Petkova 1979; Rome 2000, no. 35, p. 145

From the time of the Byzantine emperor Herakleios (610–41), the remains of what was believed to be the True Cross were housed in Constantinople. Pieces of the Cross were given as the most valuable of imperial gifts, often housed in elaborate box-like containers, such as this one. Elaborately worked in cloisonné enamel, the lid of the box displays Christ on the Cross wearing the full-length garment (colobion) found in early

images of the Crucifixion. To his sides Mary and John each raise a hand to their face in a gesture of mourning; John XIX, 26–7 is inscribed around the Cross. Twenty-seven busts of varied saints the Cross. Twenty-seven busts of varied saints the Cross. Twenty-seven busts of varied saints the Cross. The interior of the box houses a cross-shaped container for the relic with the remaining space possibly meant to contain other relics. The patterns on the base resemble a book cover, possibly a reference to the Gospels that contain the story of the Crucifixion. The whole is a testament to the promise of salvation through Christ and his sacrifice.

The reliquary's date and place of origin have been extensively debated. At one time thought to be an early work from Jerusalem (summary by M.E. Frazer in New York 1979, pp. 634–6), the reliquary is now dated to the early ninth century and argued to be from Constantinople (Kartsonis 1986, pp. 94–125; Mathews in New York 1997, p. 74; Mietke in Hildesheim 1998, pp. 49–55, 155; Evans, Holcomb and Hallman 2001, p. 39; Klein 2004A, p. 104). The enamel work has been recognised as unusual for Byzantium at this date and thus possibly the work of a foreigner from the West (Buckton 1982; Kartsonis 1986, pp. 118, 123; Buckton 1988, pp. 242–4). What is certain is that the relic, originally the most important aspect of the whole, must have come from Constantinople. As seen in other examples, such as the tenth-century Vatican staurotheke and the later Morgan triptych, True Cross relics were usually provided with containers in Constantinople even if these were elaborated elsewhere (see New York 1997, no. 35, pp. 76–7 [A. Weyl Carr] and no. 301, pp. 461–3 [W. Voelckle]).

HELEN C. EVANS

## 53

Pectoral reliquary cross

Probably Constantinople, second half of ninth or tenth century

Gold, niello, wood, total height 7.2 cm; outermost cross 4.2 x 3.2 cm; internal cross 4 x 3 cm; innermost cross (the relic) 3.7 x 2.7 cm

National Archaeological Institute and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, inv. no. 4884

PROVENANCE: Pliska, capital of the first Bulgarian kingdom, seventh to ninth century; found in 1973 during excavations in the western sector of its fortress wall, 1973

SELECTED REFERENCES: Doncheva-Petkova 1979; Rome 2000, no. 35, p. 145

This reliquary is composed of three crosses inserted into one another. Two are golden and one wooden with the relic mounted on it.

Miniature scenes executed in niello decorate both golden crosses. The external cross bears seven Christological scenes: front, above, the Annunciation; left, the Nativity; right, the Presentation in the Temple; below, the Baptism;

centre, the Transfiguration; reverse, above, Christ enthroned within a medallion supported by four angels; below, the Anastasis; over the horizontal arm, the Ascension with the Virgin Mary and the twelve Apostles. The inscriptions read: front, above, 'Ave'; left, 'Nativity'.

The internal cross features the Crucifixion and the Holy Virgin: front, Christ on the cross, with the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist on each side, the tablet with Christ's monogram, the sun and the moon. The cross rises above Golgotha with the skull of Adam. On the reverse can be seen the Virgin Nicopois (Bringer of Victory), surrounded by the holy bishops within medallions: St John Chrysostom, St Gregory the Theologian, St Nicholas and St Basil. The inscriptions read: front, 'Jesus Christ; below His shoulders – Here is thy Son, Here is thy Mother'; below, 'Place of the skull'; reverse, at both sides of Virgin Mary, 'the Holy Mother of God'; vertical arm, above, 'Chrysostom'; below, 'Basil'; left, 'Nicholas'. All the inscriptions are in Greek. The relic itself, perhaps coming from Golgotha, lies below an opening in the innermost cross.

The Pliska reliquary seems to be a product of a workshop in Constantinople. It probably came to Bulgaria as a royal gift after the conversion of the Bulgarians to Christianity in 864. Two more masterpieces associated with the same skilful handiwork are known: the Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (cat. 52) and the silver cross of Vicopisano (see Biehle 1919–32).

KATYA MELAMED

## 54

The Beresford Hope Cross

Byzantium, second half of the ninth century  
Gold cloisonné enamel mounted on silver gilt, 8.7 x 5.8 x 1.8 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 269-1886  
PROVENANCE: Debrauge Duménil Collection; Beresford Hope Collection; bought by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1886  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Labarte 1847, pp. 566–7; Kondakov 1891, pp. 176–7, figs. 49–50 (German edition); Dalton 1913, p. 266; Rosenberg 1924, pp. 32–4; Reil 1930, pp. 74, 103–4; Hackenbroich 1938, pp. 46–48; Edinburgh 1958, no. 189; Athens 1964, pp. 392–3 (M.C. Ross); Weitz 1967, no. 8; Campbell 1981, p. 13, pl. 5; London 1984, pp. 144, 127, fig. 54 (M.E. Frazer); London 1994, no. 141 (D. Buckton)

The Beresford Hope Cross is a silver-gilt pectoral cross, hinged to open, with a cruciform gold cloisonné enamel plaque mounted on either face.

The front depicts Christ crucified between half-figures of the Mother of God and St John the Evangelist. Above these figures are the sun and a crescent moon, while below them is Adam's skull, signifying Golgotha. On either side of the skull is an empty triangular setting; there is considerable damage to this half of the cross. Clumsy Greek inscriptions in gold strip set on edge in the enamel represent the conventional abbreviation for 'Jesus Christ' and Christ's words from the Cross: 'Behold your son!... Behold your mother!' (John XIX, 26–7).

The back of the cross shows the Mother of God full-length in an attitude of prayer and surrounded by the busts of different saints – John the Baptist (at the top), Peter (to the left), Andrew (to the right) and Paul (below), all identified by inscriptions.

The backgrounds against which the figures appear are translucent green, typical of the first phase of Byzantine cloisonné enamelling – from the end of iconoclasm in 843 to around the middle of the tenth century. The figure-drawing and the enamelling are not very competent, possibly suggesting manufacture early on in this period. Enamel is coloured glass: when heated to its melting-point, glass bonds with metal to form a laminate. In cloisonné enamelling, the composite surface of glass and gold strip is then finished by grinding and polishing.

Made to contain a relic, almost certainly a sliver of the True Cross, the Beresford Hope Cross would have been worn on a chain around the neck.

DAVID BUCKTON

## 55.1–29

Group of Byzantine coins

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham. The Henry Barber Trust Collection

PROVENANCE: Coins 55.1, 55.3, 55.6–11 and 55.13–28 form part of the P. D. Whiting Collection. Coin 55.2, 55.4–5 and 55.12 form part of the G. Haines Collection. Cat. 55.29 forms part of the Despot Collection of Palaeologian coins.

## 55.1

Solidus of Constantine I (303–37), R3095

Mint of Nicomedia, 335  
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm  
Obverse: Constantine I with diadem  
Reverse: Victory on a shield held by Genius.  
VICTORIA CONSTANTINAVG (the Victory of Constantine, Augustus); SMNC

## 55.2

Follis of Constantine I (307–37), R3079

Mint of Constantinople, 330–35  
Bronze, diameter 1.9 cm  
Obverse: helmeted female bust. VRBS ROMA (City of Rome).  
Reverse: she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus; CONSE

## 55.3

Solidus of Constans (337–50), R3434

Mint of Thessaloniki, 337–40  
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Constans. FLIVLCON STANS PFAVG (Flavius Julius Constantinus Augustus, the Pious, the Fortunate)  
Reverse: Victory with spear, trophy and palm branch.  
VICTORIA DDNNVAVGG; TES

## 55.4

Follis of Constantius II (337–61), R3338

Mint of Trier, 350–53  
Copper, diameter 2.3 cm  
Obverse: bust of Constantius II. DNCONSTANTIVSPFAVG



Reverse: XP(Chi-Rho) flanked by A and O.  
SALVS AVGNOSTRI TRS

## 55-5

*Solidus* of Valentinian II (375–92), LR155

Mint of Constantinople, 383–88  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Valentinian II. DN VALENTINIVS P P AVG  
Reverse: personification of Constantinople. CONCORDIA  
AAVCCCE; CONOB

## 55-6

*Solidus* of Anastasios I (491–518), B6

Mint of Constantinople  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Anastasios I. DN ANASTASIVS P P AVG  
Reverse: Victory with long, jewelled cross. VICTORIA  
AAVCCCI; CONOB

## 55-7

*Solidus* of Justinian I (527–65), B338

Mint of Constantinople, 545–65  
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Justinian I holding *globus cruciger* and shield.  
DN IVSTINI ANVS P P AVI  
Reverse: angel holding *globus cruciger* and Christogram-topped staff. VICTORIA AAVCCCS; CONOB

## 55-8

*Solidus* of Justin II (565–78), B1132

Mint of Constantinople  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Justin II holding globe topped by Victory and shield. DN IVSTINVS P P AVI  
Reverse: seated personification of Constantinople, holding spear and *globus cruciger*. VICTORIA AAVCCCA; CONOB

## 55-9

*Solidus* of Phokas (602–10), B2423

Mint of Constantinople, 603  
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Phokas holding *mapta circumis*, a cloth waved by the consul to start games in circus, and a cross. ONFOCAE  
PERPAVC  
Reverse: angel holding Christogram-topped long staff and *globus cruciger*. VICTORIA AAVCCI; CONOB

## 55-10

*Solidus* of Herakleios (610–41), B2881

Mint of Constantinople, 629–31  
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm  
Obverse: busts of Herakleios and Herakleios Constantine; small cross between. DDNN HERAKLIUS ET HERACONST P P AVI  
(our Lords Herakleios and Herakleios Constantine, Augustoi)  
Reverse: cross potent on base and three steps. VICTORIA  
AVGΘ; CONOB

## 55-11

*Solidus* of Justinian II (first reign 685–95), B4381

Mint of Constantinople, 692–95  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Christ, right hand raised in blessing, left holding the Gospel-book. IHS CRIST I JEX REGNANTIM  
(Jesus Christ, Ruler of those who rule)  
Reverse: standing figure of Justinian II, holding cross potent on steps in right hand, and *akakia* (silk roll of dust, held by

emperors during funerals) to remind them of the transience of life) in his left. DIUSTINIANVS USSEVR CHRISTI (Our Lord Justinian, Servant of Christ); at end, A (vertical); CONOP

## 55-12

*Solidus* of Justinian II (second reign 705–11), B4463

Mint of Constantinople  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Christ, cross behind head, right hand raised in blessing, left holding the Gospel-book. DNIHSCHR EX REGNANTIM  
Reverse: Justinian II to left and infant son Tiberios to right; between them cross potent on base and two steps.  
DNIUSTINIANVS ET TIBERIVS P P AVI (Our Lords Justinian and Tiberios, Augustoi)

## 55-13

*Solidus* of Leo IV (775–80), B4584

Mint of Constantinople, 776–80  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: busts of Leo IV to left and Constantine VI to right. Cross between them.  
LEONVS SESSONVS CONSTANTINVS ONEO (Leo and Constantine the Young)  
Reverse: busts of Leo III to left and Constantine V to right. Cross between them. LEON P P AVI CONSTANTINVS P P AVI (Leo Grandfather and Constantine Father)

## 55-14

*Solidus* of Irene (797–802), B4609

Mint of Constantinople  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Irene, holding *globus cruciger* in right hand and cross sceptre in left. EIRINH BASILISSH (Irene, Queen)  
Reverse: as obverse. EIRINH BASILISSHΘ (Irene, Queen)

## 55-15

*Solidus* of Michael III (842–67), B4744

Mint of Constantinople, 842–43 (?)  
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm  
Obverse: bust of Theodora holding *globus cruciger* in right hand and cross sceptre in left. +ΘEOΘO RAΘESPVSNS (Theodora, Despotina)  
Reverse: three-quarter figures of Michael III holding *globus cruciger* to left and his sister Thekla to right, holding long patriarchal cross. +MIXAHLΘ ECLA (Michael and Thekla)

## 55-16

*Solidus* of Michael III (842–67), B4745

Mint of Constantinople, 843 (?)–56  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Christ with cross behind head, raising hand in blessing and holding the Gospel-book. IHS XISX RISTOS (Jesus Christ)  
Reverse: busts of Michael III to left, and Theodora to right. +MIXAHL SΘE OΘORA (Michael and Theodora)

## 55-17

*Solidus* of Leo VI (896–912), B4807

Mint of Constantinople, 886–908  
Gold, diameter 1.9 cm  
Obverse: bust of Virgin Orans +MARIA+ and MR ΘΥ (Mother of God)  
Reverse: bust of Leo VI holding globe surmounted by patriarchal cross. LEONENCRISTOBASILEVS ROMEON (Leo, in Christ Emperor of the Romans)

## 55-18

*Solidus* of Romanos I Lakapenos (920–44), co-emperor with Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59), B4842

Mint of Constantinople, 921–31  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: Christ with cruciform nimbus, seated on lyre-backed throne, hand raised in blessing, and holding the Gospel-book. +IHSXPRESX REGNANTIM  
Reverse: busts of Romanos I to left and Christopher to right, holding patriarchal cross between them.  
ROMANVS ET XPISTOFΘ A'AGGL' (Romanos and Christopher, Augustoi)

## 55-19

*Solidus* of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59), B4855A

Mint of Constantinople, 945  
Gold, diameter 2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Christ with cruciform nimbus, hand raised in blessing, and holding the Gospel-book.  
+IHSXPRESX REGNANTIM  
Reverse: bust of Constantine VII, holding in right hand *globus cruciger* topped by patriarchal cross. CONSTAN T' AVT 'CRA TR (Constantine, Emperor of the Romans)

## 55-20

Histamenon of John I (969–76), B49543

Mint of Constantinople  
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm  
Obverse: bust of Christ Pantokrator with cross nimbus, hand raised in blessing and holding Gospels. +IHSXISREXR EGNANTIM  
Reverse: John I, holding globe, is blessed by the Virgin, and crowned by *Manus Dei* (the Hand of God). +ΘEO TOC' BOHΘ IOΘESP (Mother of God aid John Despot)

## 55-21

Histamenon of Basil II (976–1025), B4969

Mint of Constantinople, 989 (?)–1001  
Gold, diameter 2.4 cm  
Obverse: bust of Christ with cross nimbus, right hand raised in blessing, left resting on the Gospel-book.  
+IHSXISREXR EGNANTIM  
Reverse: busts of Basil II to left, and Constantine VIII to right, holding between them patriarchal cross crosslet.  
+BASILVS CONSTANTINVS (Basil and Constantine Emperors of the Romans)

## 55-22

Histamenon of Romanos IV (1068–71), B5423

Mint of Constantinople  
Gold, diameter 2.7 cm  
Obverse: three brothers stand on cushions: Constantine (left) and Andronikos (right) hold *globus cruciger* and *akakia* and Michael VII (centre), labarum and *akakia*. KWON MXANA  
Reverse: Christ crowns Romanos IV to left and Eudokia to right, each carrying *globus cruciger*. +POMANVS EVAKINIM to the left and right; IC XC in field

## 55-23

Trachy of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–80), B5781

Mint of Thessaloniki  
Electrum (alloy of gold and silver), diameter 3.3 cm  
Obverse: the Virgin holds a medallion with the Christ Child in her lap. MPΘV  
Reverse: standing figures of Manuel I to left, holding *akakia*, and St Demetrios to right, holding between them a labarum.

MANVHIA AECTH (Manuel, Despot) AH IIT I  
(Demetrius)

## 55-24

*Hyperpyron* of Isaac II Angelos (1185–95), B5B64  
Mint of Constantinople  
Gold, diameter 2.8 cm  
Obverse: The Virgin holds the nimbate Christ Child in her lap.  
MPΘV  
Reverse: Isaac II to left holding labarum-headed sceptre, and Archangel Michael to right, both hold a sword between them.  
ICA AKIOK (Isaac). X X AP MX (Archangel Michael)

## 55-25

*Hyperpyron* of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–82), B5151

Mint of Constantinople, 1261–82  
Gold, diameter 2.4 cm  
Obverse: half figure of the Virgin Orans, within the walls of Constantinople. MΘ  
Reverse: Archangel Michael presents Michael VIII, who is kneeling before Enthroned Christ. X/THA/K. IC XC: AP/M

## 55-26

*Hyperpyron* of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328), B6189

Mint of Constantinople, 1282–94  
Gold, diameter 2.3 cm  
Obverse: half figure of the Virgin Orans, within the walls of Constantinople. BM; \*\*  
Reverse: Andronikos II prostrate before Christ, who blesses the emperor, and holds the Gospels. ANAP/NIKOC/[JNXO]/[IIO]/[COI]/AAE/OA/T' (Andronikos Palaiologos, Despot in Christ); IC/XC

## 55-27

Trachy of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328), B6210

Mint of Thessaloniki, 1282–94  
Copper, diameter 2.1 cm  
Obverse: half-length figure of St Demetrios, holding sword and shield. OAT/ MH/TPI (Saint Demetrios)  
Reverse: Andronikos II, holding *globus* topped by patriarchal cross, and fleur-de-lis-topped sceptre. AN/[KA]/IT/EA (Andronikos Palaiologos, Despot)

## 55-28

*Stavraton* of John VIII (1425–48), B6492

Mint of Constantinople  
Silver, diameter 2.9 cm  
Obverse: bust of Christ with cross nimbus; pellets in outer circle. IC XC  
Reverse: bust of John VIII.  
+IOAEIO T.ICOHAAEOAOFOC/[IXAPIT.H.BAC]/[POMAION+ (Despot John Palaiologos, Emperor of the Romans by the Grace of God)

## 55-29

One eighth *stavraton* of Constantine XI (1448–53), 4-2006

Mint of Constantinople, 1449–53  
Silver, diameter 1.3 cm  
Obverse: bust of Christ. IC XC  
Reverse: bust of Constantine. XI K C

In a world without electronic and printed media, imagery and inscriptions on Byzantine coins

(Whitting 1973; Grierson 1982 and 1999a; Georganteli 2008) provided one of the most powerful media through which imperial and religious ideology reached individuals within and outside the borders of the empire through networks of trade, pilgrimage, war and intermarriage with Western and Eastern royal families (London 2006a). Constantine the Great widely advertised the foundation of Constantinople by making iconographical references on his coins to the legendary building of Rome by Romulus in the eighth century BC. Coins from the fourth to the sixth century struck in Constantinople continued to convey this message by depicting traditional symbols of Rome. The she-wolf suckling the twins (cat. 55.2) and female personifications of Constantinople modelled on similar Roman types (cats 55.5, 55.8) bear witness to continual aspirations of successive rulers for their developing imperial capital (Buhl 1995, pp. 61–77).

During the same period coins superbly mirror the Christianisation of the empire by gradually substituting Christian for pagan imagery and messages. The Greco-Roman symbol of Nike/Victoria (Victory) was transformed into an angel (cats 55.4, 55.3, 55.6, 55.7, 55.9) and the cult of Salus, which linked public welfare and prosperity to the emperor's person (Marwood 1988; Winkler 1995), was effortlessly combined on coins of the Constantinian dynasty with the Christian Chi-Rho (cat. 55.4). The latter, together with the symbol of the Cross, first appeared on fourth-century coins, developing under Tiberios II (578–82) into the cross potent on steps, a motif that dominated the reverse of gold coins throughout the seventh century (cat. 55.10). Until the fifteenth century the cross, either on its own or carried by the emperor, his associates or heavenly powers, remained a very distinct element of numismatic iconography across the spectrum of metallic values and denominations. The face of Christ appeared first on the gold *solidi* of Justinian II's first reign (685–95) as the 'Zeus-like' bearded and long-haired Pantokrator (cat. 55.11). During Justinian II's second reign (705–11) Christ appeared again on the obverse of gold *solidi*, this time curly haired and short bearded (cat. 55.12).

During iconoclast emperors replaced the bust of Christ with crosses and their portraits. Other members of the imperial family are also shown (sons, fathers and forefathers), the final result being similar to family portraits (cat. 55.13). Following the restoration of icons in 843 the 'Zeus-like' type of Christ was reintroduced on the obverse of coins struck by Empress Theodora (cat. 55.16). From then onwards Christ standing, enthroned (cat. 55.18), in bust holding the Gospel-book (cats 55.19–21), or crowning the imperial couple (cat. 55.22) dominated the obverse of the Middle Byzantine coins. After 1261 Michael VIII (1259–82), Andronikos II (1282–1328) and

Andronikos III (1328–41) struck on the reverse of their gold *hyperpyra* powerful compositions of Christ in the company of the emperor (cats 55.25–26). It is on the obverse of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century silver *basilika*, *stavrata* and their denominations that Christ makes his last appearance (cats 55.28–29). The style is distinctively Western and quite crude in comparison to earlier issues, reflecting the artistic references of Byzantine die-engravers and the dwindling resources of the shrunken Byzantine Empire.

Divine endorsement and heavenly protection of the empire were projected on Byzantine coins also through the display of the *Manus Dei* (Hand of God) crowning the emperors, and the Virgin, saints and angelic powers accompanying them (cats 55.20–6). The Virgin Mary was first shown on the gold *solidi* of Leo VI (886–912) (cat. 55.17). From the tenth century her image, praying, holding the infant Christ or blessing the emperor became widespread on Byzantine coins (Penna 2000) (cats 55.20, 55.23–6). The Archangel Michael appears on the gold *hyperpyra* (cat. 55.24), electrum *trachea* and copper *tetartera* of Isaac II (1185–95 and again 1203–04), reflecting this emperor's devotion to his cult (Choniates, *Historia* I, p. 442; Hendy 1999, p. 368). After 1261, Michael, warrior patron saint of the Palaiologoi, appears frequently on their coins alone, blessing the emperor or presenting him to Christ (cat. 55.25), as a further reminder of the divine protection of the city of Constantinople and the empire (Talbot 1993, pp. 258–61). St George's image is encountered mostly on Constantinopolitan coins, while that of St Demetrios, patron saint of Thessaloniki (Cormack 1989; Macrides 1990), on coins of this city in the company of the emperor (cat. 55.23) or on his own (cat. 55.27) (Georganteli 2001; Morrison 2003).

As for the imperial representation on coins, Byzantine rulers continually claimed to be the sole legitimate rulers of the old Roman Empire (Angelov 2007) through appropriate iconography and inscriptions. With the exception of a short-lived exploration of portraiture under Phokas (602–10) (cat. 55.9), Leo VI (886–912) and Constantine VII (sole rule 945–59) (cats 55.17, 55.19), the majority of images are sheer icons of majesty with no reference to the physical likeness of actual people. The traditional Roman profile and three-quarter bust was abandoned in 538/39 under Justinian I (527–65) in favour of a facing one, while more complex compositions of emperors, their associates and heavenly powers on Middle and Late Byzantine coins advertised continuity of the institution and the earthly and divine protection of the empire. John V (1341–91) was the last emperor to issue gold coins, and the silver *stavraton* (worth half an old gold *hyperpyron*) became, from the 1360s, the main high-value currency for the last century of the empire's







No expense was spared to set out the text over many pages of parchment, and this may suggest that the production of such a special liturgical book was the endeavour of the patriarchate or imperial palace at Constantinople. A note written on folio 1 records the opinion of a bishop of Heraklia named Methodios (probably in the second half of the eighteenth century) that the writing was actually done by a twelfth-century emperor – either Alexios Komnenos or Manuel Komnenos.

ROBIN CORMACK

## 62

### Painted and gilded glass bowl

Constantinople, tenth century  
Glass, dark violet in colour, gilded and painted, silver gilt and glass cabochons, height 17 cm; diameter 17 cm; total breadth 33 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Treviso, inv. no. 83  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pagni 1986, no. 100, p. 60; Molinier 1988, pp. 38–60, no. 66, p. 90; Gallo 1989, V, no. 3, p. 197; Philippe 1979, pp. 100–01; Halançur 1971, no. 83, pp. 77–8 (A. Grabar); Paris 1984, no. 20, pp. 181–3 (R. Keyssold-Brown); Whitehouse and Pflügl 2001.

This small hemispherical bowl with its flared edge, made of very dark, almost black, violet-coloured glass, is a piece of exceptional workmanship. The delicate decoration of gilded arabesques covers the whole external surface and contains seven mythological figures; the scenes appear between medallions adorned with polychrome rosettes and fourteen profile heads, each in its own small tondo. The larger figures look like Classical figures, but it is not easy to identify them as they have no inscriptions and may be purposely enigmatic, like those on the Veroli Casket (cat. 66). The smaller profile heads resemble cameos but are equally enigmatic.

The mount in silver-gilt recalls the mount of the Sisinios Chalice, also in the Treasury of St Mark's; it consists of two handles, slightly unevenly attached, which present a four-petalled flower in the upper volute and a blue glass cabochon in the centre.

The idea that the painted glass bowl is Classical and the mount medieval is no longer maintained; both the bowl and the mount seem to have been made in Constantinople and to date from the tenth century. The pseudo-Kufic inscriptions inside the rim and on the outside of the base are, it seems, ornamental. The combination of Classical imagery, Byzantine ornament and imitation of Arabic writings suggests that the bowl belongs to the sophisticated atmosphere of the Byzantine court at the time of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59).

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

## 63

### Fragment of the lower part of a dalmatic

Constantinople, eleventh century  
Figured samite 4 lats, twill weave 2 lie 1; silk; white linen sewing thread, 51.3 × 107.5 cm

Musée d'Histoire, Non prospect du chapitre cathédral de Saint-Étienne  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Schmedding 1978, pp. 230–2; Carroussel 1999, no. 60, p. 101

The characteristic cut of this silk fragment indicates that it is the lower part of a priestly garment, probably a dalmatic (a long wide-sleeved tunic used in the liturgy). Now in the Church of Valère, Sion, Switzerland, where it forms part of an impressive collection of medieval fabrics used to wrap relics, it comes from Sion Cathedral and was discovered in 1923; it was restored in 1973.

The bold design with large medallions might seem unsuitable for use as a garment. However, manuscript illuminations show that such patterns were used, as a secular example, the representation of one of the courtiers of Emperor Nikephoros III Botaniates, c. 1071–81 (*Homilies de Jean Chrysostome*, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, cod. Coislin 79, fol. 2r), demonstrates.

The large medallions contain twisted griffins. As in the art of Sassanid Persia, every joint of each of these fantastic animals is marked with a rosette or some other ornament. Other circular patterns decorate the space above the hindquarters of the griffins, as well as the upper part of the medallion.

The use of purple might suggest that this was a diplomatic gift (Muthesius 1995, pp. 165–72), but it is just as likely that it was booty from the Fourth Crusade. Luxurious silk fabrics intended for court or diplomatic use were woven either in official workshops in Constantinople or in strictly controlled private workshops.

The colour scheme of the silk is dominated by the strong violet hue of the purple dye, which stands out against the black background. The white weft thread is used only to emphasise the stylised shape of the griffins' eyes. Very few fabrics in purple have survived from Byzantium, which gives added importance to this piece.

MARIELLE MARTINIANT-REBER

## 64

### The Virgin's Grotto

Constantinople-Venice: temple, fourth–fifth century (?); diadem, ninth–tenth century; statuette, thirteenth century

Rock crystal, silver gilt, gold cloisonné enamel, precious stones, pearls, total height 20 cm, diadem diameter 13 cm; height 3.5 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Treviso, inv. no. 92  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pagni 1986, no. 111, p. 68; Molinier 1988, p. 62, no. 100, pp. 62–6; Gallo 1989, III, no. 8, p. 271; Halançur 1971, no. 92, pp. 81–2 (A. Grabar); Paris 1984, no. 8, pp. 17–23 (D. Akoussis and M. E. Fraser); Ravenna 2001, pp. 221–2 (M. Galoppo)

The object first mentioned as the 'Grotto della Vergine' (The Virgin's Grotto) by Antonio Pasini in 1886 is composed of three parts dating from different periods: the temple in rock crystal is

ascribed with reasonable conviction to the Late Antique period, the diadem of Emperor Leo VI in silver-gilt is Byzantine and belongs to the ninth–tenth century, and the statuette of the Virgin in silver-gilt was probably made in Venice in the thirteenth century when the various pieces were assembled. The work can be identified as the *eccelesiam unam de cristallo furnitam argento denudata* listed in the inventory of 1325.

The votive diadem of Leo VI (886–912) is a fine example of Byzantine enamelling. The fascia in silver-gilt formerly contained, between two rows of pellets, fourteen medallions made of cloisonné enamel edged with pearls and alternating with triangular cabochons of garnet. The seven surviving medallions portray the emperor, identified by scholars as Leo VI, flanked on his left by St Paul and St Andrew and on his right by St Mark, St Bartholomew, St Luke and St James. The missing enamels are thought to have presented the image of Christ opposite that of the emperor, flanked by the six Apostles to total the canonical number twelve. Contrary to what some scholars have suggested, the presence of the emperor makes it unlikely that the coronet could have originally been the upper rim of a goblet. It is now considered that the peacocks attached to the upper edge, two of which remain out of the original three, with their tails decorated with bright blue paste gems and with a ring on their backs, prove that formerly the diadem and also possibly later the whole grotto were to be hung up. In addition, the small rings on the birds' beaks and on the lower rim of the coronet are thought to have been intended to hang strings of pearls and precious stones in order to increase the devotional impact of the piece.

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

## 65

### Casket

Byzantium, tenth–eleventh centuries, with later alterations  
Bone on a wooden core, with brass clasps, 16.1 × 24 × 15.6 cm

Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, O. Dat. 1273  
PROVENANCE: in the collection of Germeau, sold in 1869, then that of A. and F. Duhaud (see cat. 66)  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1930, no. 20, Paris 1999, no. 171 (J. Durand) with earlier bibliography

Carved in bone on a wooden core, this box appears to be a cheaper imitation of more luxury ivory versions such as the Veroli Casket (cat. 66). The twelve small rectangular plaques on the sides and centre of the lid show a variety of figures, some of whom are identifiable: those on the front include two versions of Heracles fighting a lion, with between them a seated warrior (now partially hidden by the lock) whose pose resembles that of Joshua (compare Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1930, no. 10). Others are more generic: a variety of hunters and fighters, a centaur, and griffins attacking animals (the one on the right end is a modern copy), and the slightly incongruous

inclusion of a man making an offering with covered hands. A further nineteen griffins are shown, either in pairs or attacking deer, around the angled sides of the lid. The plaques are surrounded by rosette strips, a feature common to all Byzantine boxes of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Traces of gilding and paint suggest that the original appearance of the box would have been greatly embellished with colour. The functions of these boxes cannot be discerned from their decoration, but they were presumably made to house small precious objects in a domestic setting.

It is possible to find precedents for each individual image on other boxes, which suggests that such boxes were mass-produced by combining plaques from stock collections. However, the particularly eclectic mixture of Old Testament, mythological and generic scenes on this example is puzzling. The range, as well as variations in the carving of the plaques, has led to suggestions that the box is a montage of plaques from different sources, combined either in the Middle Ages, possibly in South Italy, or in the nineteenth century to produce one complete example.

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 66

### The Veroli Casket

Constantinople, mid-tenth century  
Ivory and bone on wood core, metal hardware, 11.2 × 40.5 × 16 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 196-189  
PROVENANCE: purchased from the Cathedral of Veroli by John Webb in 1861; sold by him to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1865 for £420  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1930, no. 21; Weitzmann 1959, pp. 169–72; Edlinburgh 1958, no. 122; Berckhath 1962; Simon 1984; Carter 1984–85; Carter 1991, pp. 36–103, 117, 120–1, 202, 209–30, figs 65, 68; New York 1997, no. 153 (A. Carter); Hanson 1999; London 2001a, no. 103 (A. Eastmond); Maguire and Dauterman Maguire 2007, pp. 161–6

The Veroli Casket allows us to view an aspect of the Byzantine world of which little material evidence now survives: the private sphere of elite entertainment and luxury, a world filled with humour, satire and eroticism, balanced by erudition and virtuosity. It is perhaps the finest ivory carving of the tenth century, albeit combined rather more crudely with bone rosette strips as framing elements. The seven ivory plaques with figural carving that adorn the sides and lid of this box display an apparently eclectic mixture of mythological imagery: on the left of the lid the rape of Europa is placed next to stone-throwing youths; on the front Asklepios and Hygieia are shown viewing the sacrifice of Iphigenia, to which they have no link. Other figures, such as the woman having a thorn removed from her foot by an *eros* on the front left plaque are impossible to identify with certainty. The most common theme is that of Dionysiac revelry, evident in dancing maenads on the lid, the naked *erotes* who cavort on most of the

plaques and the overt eroticism on the back. On that side too, scenes are echoed and parodied: the rapes of Europa and Ganymede can both be seen re-enacted by *erotes*.

No attempt to find a common theme or source for the images has yet been successful; rather the box appears to represent a playful tenth-century intermingling of deliberately ambiguous myths for viewers to disentangle. The juxtaposition of solemn tragedy and erotic comedy on the box means that the Classical past is, like the carving of the ivory itself, heavily undercut. Henry and Eunice Maguire have suggested that the inclusion of humour and absence of identifying inscriptions were a means of 'disarming' the pagan subject-matter for its Christian audience (Maguire and Dauterman Maguire 2007, p. 162). Elements in the images may also have sought to provide a Classical sanction for the irreverent, occasionally scatological, side of court life as it is sometimes commented on in chronicles: the maenads on the lid, for example, wear the pointed hats of theatrical mimes, so linking the contemporary world with that of the mythical past.

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 67

### Carved box with emperors riding and hunting

Tenth or eleventh century  
Carved and stained ivory, said to show traces of gilding, with silver (replacement?) lock, hinges and corner reinforcements, 13.4 × 26.4 × 13 cm

Treasure de la Cathédrale de Troyes  
PROVENANCE: said to be from Constantinople, brought after the 1204 Sack of Constantinople to Troyes by Jean Langlois, chaplain to the Bishop of Troyes, *Chambre de Trésor*  
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1997, no. 141, pp. 201–2 (H. Maguire); Athens 2001, no. 45, pp. 158–9 (V. Vialon)

This solid ivory box with no wooden core represents, in its material, extraordinary luxury, and in its images imperial power. Like the equestrian statue of Justinian on a column at the centre of Constantinople, the riders on the box enact both ceremonial allegory and heroic narrative. On the lid, in their imperial regalia, they receive territorial power from the timeless and seasonless personification of a city who offers an emperor a crown. On the front, the riders are lion-hunters galloping without stirrups past winter's leafless branches. A similar branch tops the end panels, suggesting a change of season or reign; a phoenix preens itself below, among burgeoning leafy stems, as a sign of endless renewal. All the equestrian figures have general parallels in Byzantine silks; this bird resembles representations of the propitious *fenghuang* bird in Chinese gold or silver works of art.

The stallions on the lid, like Justinian's well-built horse in Constantinople, stand with three legs still and long, straight tails. But on the front, the hunters' cloaks stream out like their horses' knotted tails. The hunters, probably father and

son, are not, as they appear to be, back to back; they turn fully to face one another as the archer, wearing a plumed *toupha* helmet, again like Justinian, rescues his sword-bearing companion with a variation of the half-turned 'Parthian shot'. The last panel, on the back, is also active and temporal: in autumn, with acorns ripe on the tree, a boar-hunter, probably the younger emperor proving his valour, tramples his fallen cloak as he thrusts his spear.

Both riding and walking, on the lid and the front, one hunter wears an unusual cap-like helmet with the cuirass, and boots without greaves or spurs. On the lid the emperors' cloaks are pulled to a shoulder fibula. Their crowns and the stirrups under their feet are post-Justinianic; amulet crescent-shaped pendants caparison their horses. Yet the spectators added to this scene on the lid straddle the high defensive wall in humorous mimicry of the splendid but passive imperial riders.

EUNICE DAUTERMAN MAGUIRE

## 68

### Ivory with Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos crowned by Christ

Constantinople, 945  
Ivory, 18.6 × 9.5 × 0.7 cm

State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, inv. D-62  
PROVENANCE: from Justinian, Armenia, Ussakov Collection of Constantinian A.S. Ussakov, Moscow, 1879–81; State Historical Museum, Moscow, from 1924; State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, from 1925  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no. 30, table XIV, n. 12; Grabar 1936, p. 2; Edlinburgh 1958, no. 61, p. 32; Bank 1968, no. 124–5; Moscow 1977, vol. 2, no. 386, pp. 69–70; Malakova 1978, Bank 1985, no. 122; New York 1997, no. 140, pp. 202–3; Athens 2001, no. 15, pp. 161–2, fig. on p. 165

The inscriptions read: around Christ's head: IC XC (Jesus Christ); above the emperor: ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ ΕΝ Θ(Ε)Ω / ΑΥΤΟ ΚΡΑ / ΤΩΡ (Constantine Emperor in God; beneath his left arm: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ (Emperor of the Romans). The dating of the piece is based on style and the inscriptions, in which Constantine is called 'emperor' of the Romans. Both suggest that the ivory was executed at Constantinople during the short period between 27 January 945, when Constantine VII became sole ruler, and 6 April, when his son Romanos became co-ruler until Constantine's death in 959. Grabar defined this scene as 'the emperor's investiture by Christ' (Grabar 1936, p. 72). The original function of this ivory is unknown; it may have been a commemorative gift, like the earlier consular diptychs or perhaps the central decorative element on a manuscript.

The naturalistic proportions of the figures and the detailed carving of the relief of the ivory are particularly noteworthy. The emperor is depicted without a halo, but with the imperial attributes of the jewelled stole (*loros*) and gem-studded crown. There was an attempt to render the emperor's appearance accurately: the specific shape of his hair and beard is found on gold coins of the



## 399



sense of volume to the plaque). Their slightly elongated figures and impressively carved drapery give both a sense of monumentality. The inscription that has been painstakingly carved in relief above their heads (rather than merely incised into the ivory like their names, which appear around their haloes) makes clear their interaction and their purpose: ΚΕΥΟC ΘΕΟΥΡΤΟΝ CΥΛΛΑΛΕΙ ΤΩ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩ ΒΑΑΒΗC ΚΕΠΕCΘΑΙ ΔΕCΠΟΤΗΝ ΚΩΝCΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΝ (The instrument of God [St Paul] speaks together with the chaste man [St John] in order that the Emperor Constantine be protected from harm). Kalavrezou (in New York 1997, pp. 141–4) has noted that plaque was once part of a set, of which two other plaques survive: one shows SS. Andrew and Peter paired in an identical format (and with a similar inscription wishing for relief for an emperor Constantine), the other portraying Christ enthroned (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, nos 44, 54). They were presumably once mounted with Christ in the centre to act as a composite intercessory object.

Although the plaque might be thought to refer to a particular illness of the emperor Constantine, the ivory itself is not unique. An almost identical version survives in Dresden, with the same inscription (New York 1997, no. 90). This suggests that these ivories were produced more widely for members of the imperial family or court, and were to remind their viewers of the need to pray for the emperor at all times.

The date of the plaque and identity of the emperor Constantine are contested, but it is most likely to refer to Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59). The carving of the ivory is similar to that on a triptych in the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, which also has an inscription invoking protection for the health of an emperor, generally agreed to be Constantine VII (Oikonomides 1995; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no. 31). I prefer this dating.

ANTONY EASTMOND

76

### Triptych with Deisis and Saints

Constantinople, c.1100  
Ivory with traces of gilt, 25.2 × 33 × 2.9 cm (open)

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, inv. no. 66447  
PROVENANCE: acquired by Pope Benedict XIV from a private collection  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Gori 1799, iii, pp. 107–10, pl. XXXV–XXXVI; New York 1997, no. 70, pp. 131–2 (J. Kalavrezou); Rami 2007, no. 5, pp. 61–3 (C. Pantaleo)

This triptych has three carved panels, which were originally gilded; the central panel equals the sum of the other two panels in size and is attached to them by hinges. The internal face of the central panel and the corresponding faces of the two side panels are decorated in relief with figures of saints, aligned in a horizontal band and separated by busts in medallion-shaped frames. The scene of Deisis in the upper half, echoing the ceremonial of

the imperial court (Christ with the Book, his hand raised in blessing, enthroned between the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist, whose arms are raised in a gesture of intercession), is paired with the Apostles in the lower half, who can be identified by their names on the various figures (James, John, Peter, Paul and Andrew); in the medallions with the busts can be seen Philip, Luke, Mark, Matthew and Thomas.

The side wings show the military saints in the upper part (St Theodore Tiro and St Eustathios in the left-hand wing, and St Theodore Stratelates and St George in the right); they are accompanied by a row in the lower part which comprises a combination of local martyrs and miracle workers (St Arator and St Prokopios in the left-hand wing, St Demetrios and St Eustratios in the right), interspersed with eastern saints (St Mercurios and St Stephen in the left-hand medallions, St Panteleimon and St Menas in the right).

Similarly, on the external face of the two doors, to correspond with the Fathers of the Church in the upper part (St Basil and St Gregory of Nazianzos on the left; St John Chrysostom and St Clement of Ankyra on the right), a series of martyrs and bishops occupy the lower band (St Gregory Thaumaturgos and St Severian on the left; St Agathon and St Nicholas of Myra on the right), producing a kind of 'illustrated litany' hierarchically structured around the figure of Christ. The half-length figures in the medallions (St Kosmas and St Damianos on the left; St Phokas and St Blasios on the right) also conform to this logical transcendental progression: from the bishops and patriarchs of militant Orthodoxy, visible on the icon when closed, the spectator is led towards the liturgical action within, along a way of doctrinal salvation mediated by the Church and its teachings.

The style and dimensions of the triptych assign it to the category of portable icons; it can be compared to two other celebrated triptychs, that in the Palazzo Venezia, Rome, and that in the Louvre, Paris; with these it forms the so-called 'Romanos-Group'. The triptych in the Palazzo Venezia bears an inscription dating from the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59), but the date of the three pieces, based on stylistic considerations, may span about one hundred years, from the mid-tenth century for the triptych in Palazzo Venezia, to the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries for the Vatican piece, to the middle of the eleventh century for the triptych in Paris.

GUIDO CORNINI

77

### The 'Harbaville' triptych with Deisis and saints

Constantinople, mid-tenth century  
Elephant ivory, with traces of gilding and red paint (not original), 24 (max.) × 14.3 (the centre) and 28 cm (open)

Museo di Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, no. 9247  
PROVENANCE: acquired in the early nineteenth century by M. Bregny de Poitiers, Anzac, later in the collection of L.-F. Harbaville (1790–1866) and his heirs  
SELECTED REFERENCES: De Lamas 1886; Schaubert 1892, pp. 294–306; Molinier 1896, no. 12 (with bibliography); Peirce and Tyler 1926, pp. 4–7; Pan 1935, no. 76; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no. 31 (with bibliography); 1939, pp. 21–2; Edinburg 1938, no. 75; Pan 1938, no. 149; Beckwith 1939, pp. 21–2; Adami 1964, no. 70; Kalavrezou 1977, 1980, pl. 13; doc. 328–3; Brussels 1984, no. 8; Cutler 1991, pp. 692–4; Pan 1992, no. 149; Cutler 1994, pp. 132, 140, 201, 211, 214, 220, figs 152–3, 170, 227; New York 1997, no. 80; Connor 1998, p. 16, fig. 7; Rami 2007, no. 5, pp. 61–3 (with bibliography); Durand 2007, pp. 86–93, no. 16 (with bibliography); Durand and Durand 2007

The 'Harbaville' triptych is one of the finest surviving Byzantine ivories. When the shutters are open the upper part of the central panel displays the traditional image of the Deisis: Christ enthroned with two half-length archangels beside him; standing at his side, the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist. Above, three small medallions contain busts of the prophets: Elijah, in the centre, Jeremiah and Isaiah, respectively in connection with the Baptist and the Virgin. Below the Deisis stand five Apostles: Peter, in the centre, James, John, Paul and Andrew. On the shutters, in three rows, from top to bottom, stand four soldier saints (Theodore Tiro, Theodore Stratelates, George, Eustathios), four half-length saints (Mercurios and Thomas the Apostle, Philip the Apostle and Panteleimon), and four standing martyr saints (Eustratios, Arethas, Demetrios, Prokopios). The backs of the shutters display, in similar rows, four Fathers of the Church (Basil, Gregory of Nazianzenos, John Chrysostom, Clement of Ankyra), four half-length saints (Phokas, Blasios, Kosmas and Damianos) and then two more bishop saints (Nicholas and Gregory Thaumaturgos) and two martyrs (Severian and James the Persian). The reverse side of the central panel has the paradisiacal vision of the victorious cross, with IC XC NI/KA (Jesus Christ is victorious), painted against a sky dotted with stars, with two bent cypress trees (symbols of immortality) inhabited by birds, one tree covered with a vine laden with bunches of grapes (an allusion to the Sacrifice and the Resurrection), the other with ivy (a symbol of immortality).

At the foot of the trees, among clumps of shrubs, including olive trees and wheat, lions, a hare and some birds are shown in peaceful coexistence.

The style and high quality of the triptych aligns it with the 'Romanos Ivory' in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, and it can be ascribed to the same workshop; this ivory depicts Christ crowning an emperor by the name of Romanos, with his empress Eudoxia. Despite recent attempts to assign it to the reign of Romanos IV and to the eleventh century (Kalavrezou 1977), the figures are generally identified, since Peirce and Tyler 1926, as the young Romanos II (959–63), son of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos and Bertha, daughter of

Hugh of Italy, who received the name Eudoxia in Constantinople, who married Romanos in 944 and died in 949. Hence the dating of the 'Harbaville' triptych to the mid-tenth century.

Two other triptychs in Rome of the same date (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, nos 31 and 32) offer the Deisis with saints, with the same Apostles and minor variations in the selected saints. But only the Louvre triptych adds prophets, especially Isaiah, who announced the Messiah, and Elijah, present at the Transfiguration and about whom Christ was questioned by Peter on resurrection, placed in the vertical axis of Christ and Peter. The main theme, presented with remarkable coherence, is the salvation of humankind through the Resurrection of Christ, the Incarnation being replaced in this arrangement, and the risen Christ surrounded by saints and 'witnesses'; it is the image of salvation as promised in the Gospel to believers. The universal Church, whose perpetual prayer celebrates in the liturgy the sacrifice made by Christ and his Resurrection, affirms salvation through the 'martyrs', bishops and theologians depicted on the shutters. Finally, on the reverse side, the Cross proclaims Christ's victory over death, while the plants and animals remind us of the grace granted in Psalm CIV (CIII), based on the contemplation of creation. Salvation is replaced in the vision of the whole of creation, Christ enthroned in the Deisis appearing not only as the impartial God of Judgment, but also as Pantokrator.

JANNIE DURAND

78

### Ivory triptych with Crucifixion and saints (The Borradaile Triptych)

Constantinople, tenth century  
Ivory, 27.2 × 15.7 cm (central panel); 7.8 cm (left wing); 8.5 cm (right wing)

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1923, 1925, 1  
PROVENANCE: said to be from a convent in Rome; bought in 1905–06 by Charles Borradaile; bequeathed to the British Museum, London, 1923  
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1923, no. 53; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no. 38; Kitzinger 1955, pp. 57–108, pl. 33; Edinburg 1938, no. 124; Adami 1964, no. 79; Kalavrezou 1977, p. 324, fig. 23; Brussels 1979, no. 51; Brussels 1984, no. 8, 9 (D. Buckton); Cutler 1994, p. 235, fig. 242; London 1994, no. 153 (A. Eastmond)

The centre of this portable triptych presents a meditation on Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. Although he is shown dead, his head slumped and his eyes closed, Christ's body is erect on the Cross, hinting at his triumph over death. The furrowed brows of the two angels and of the Virgin and St John on either side of the Cross indicate their grief, but their gestures seem designed not so much to accentuate their sorrow, but rather to present the body of Christ to the viewer as an object of contemplation.

The message of suffering is continued on the two wings, which show ten martyrs. In the top register are busts of a pair of doctor saints, Kyros and John; below them in the central register are three warrior saints in military dress, George,

Theodore Stratelates and Eustathios, along with the bishop Clement of Ankyra; and in the bottom register are a further two warrior saints in court dress, Menas and Prokopios, paired with St Stephen the Protomartyr and Kyrion, leader of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (shown here with his martyr's crown over his head; Walter 2003, pp. 107–8, 171–6). The theme of sacrifice inside the triptych is balanced by the image of victory and rebirth on the outside. The exterior of the two wings are each decorated with crosses, inscribed IC XC NIKA: 'Jesus Christ Conquers', with busts of SS. Joachim and Anna in the centres, and SS. Basil and Barbara; and James the Persian and Thekla at the terminals.

Many of the saints on the triptych are very obscure: James the Persian appears on just two other ivories, the Palazzo Venezia and Harbaville triptychs (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, nos 31, 33), and Clement of Ankyra on just one (the Harbaville again); SS. Kyros and John, and Kyrion appear on no others. These unusual choices are generally thought to reflect the personal preferences of the patrons who commissioned these ivories (as Goldschmidt and Weitzmann proposed). However, the fact that the ivories on which they do appear are closely related suggests that it may reflect a broader court promotion of the cults of these particularly unusual saints.

ANTONY EASTMOND

79

### Icon with the Koimesis

Constantinople, second half of the tenth century  
Steatite, partially gilt, 13 × 11.2 × 1.7 cm

Konsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Konstkammer (B797)  
SELECTED REFERENCE: Kalavrezou 1980a

This plaque represents the best surviving example of an artistic medium first used in the tenth century for precious small private icons. The stone is steatite, soapstone, dense but soft enough to permit ease of carving. It became a popular material in addition to ivory, which could be used for small-scale relief sculpture. Its light green colour, favoured by the Byzantines, with a little gilding on surfaces such as haloes and decorative borders, made it attractive and more affordable than ivory.

This icon depicts the Koimesis of the Virgin. She is lying on a bier surrounded by the Apostles, who mourn her death. Christ stands in the centre behind the bier, holding in his arms the soul of the Virgin in the form of a baby in swaddling clothes. Unfortunately, the head has broken off, as well as the angel who was flying above in a symmetrical position to the one on the right, who is ready to receive the soul and carry it to heaven. The scene is placed under an undercut and partially pierced baldachin of a type found in ivories of the tenth

century. In contrast to the ivory columns that support the baldachins in ivories, those in steatite are solid and have the unusual motif of the Heracles knot which makes its appearance in this period and is also found in the columns of the templon screen in churches (Kalavrezou 1980b).

Thus the scene of the Koimesis is placed within a setting that recalls the position in churches where icons are located.

The style of this icon shows that at the beginning of steatite production carvers adhered to the carving technique used for ivory; they might even be the same craftsmen. The examples of the later centuries show us, however, that a different approach had to be taken in carving steatite as this high relief proved to be detrimental to the survival of these icons because steatite is highly fragile.

IOLE KALAVREZOU

80

### Alabaster paten with Christ

Constantinople, tenth–eleventh century  
Alabaster, silver-gilt, rock crystal, pearls, cloisonné enamel, 3.2 × 3.2 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 67  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pan 1886, no. 106, p. 65; Molinier 1888, no. 94, p. 95; Gallo 1967, vi, no. 14, p. 280; Hahnloser 1971, pp. 55–7, no. 67, p. 79 (A. Grabar); Pan 1984, no. 17, pp. 69–70 (M. E. Frazer); Monteverchi and Vasco Rocca 1986, pp. 101, 104

The Treasury of St Mark's, Venice, owns a number of chalices and patens, the vessels most closely associated with the liturgy of the Eucharist, and as a group they represent some of the most outstanding examples of Byzantine workmanship; the chalices outnumber the patens but the latter are equally exceptional. This paten appears in the inventory of 1325: *Platinum unam de alabastro cum Christo ad smaldum in medio varilam argentea*; it is certainly the largest and the most exquisitely made, and this applies both to the stone and the mount. The alabaster platter, cracked from one side to the other, is finely carved in the shape of a six-petalled flower and contains at its centre a silver-gilt disk bearing the figure of Christ in cloisonné enamel, surrounded by the words used for the consecration of the wafer in the Greek rite: 'Take this and eat, this is my body.'

The silver-gilt mount consists of a circular foot connected by three strips to the richly decorated rim where, between two rows of pearls, now mostly missing, underlined by four rows of metal pellets, crystal rock cabochons are placed; the gems alternate in shape, circular and rectangular, and in background colour, red and blue.

Particularly elegant is the relationship between the disk with the figure of Christ and the inscription surrounding it, between the medallion and the plate shaped like a six-petalled flower and between the plate and its border decorated with the elegant row of cabochons.

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI



## Chalice of the Patriarchs

Constantinople, tenth or early eleventh century  
Sardonyx (cup); silver-gilt, gold cloisonné enamel, pearls, precious stones and rock crystal cabochons (mount), 27.3 × 18 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Treviso, inv. no. 99  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Papanicolaou 1971, no. 29, p. 86; Haldon 1971, no. 40, pp. 51–52 (A. Grabar); Pappas 1971, no. 40, pp. 51–52 (D. Alexiou and M. E. Triantafyllidis); Galopoulou 1971, no. 40, pp. 51–52 (A. Neri).

## Known as the 'Chalice of the Patriarchs'

because of its images of various patriarchs of Constantinople in cloisonné enamel work, this sumptuous chalice – both in size and in beauty of workmanship – is a major example of the court art of the period.

The hemispherical cup is carved from a block of dark red sardonyx flecked with white, the white flecks giving added luminosity to the stone. The mount in silver-gilt encircles the upper border of the cup, and bears an inscription in blue enamel which cites the words pronounced by the priest when he consecrates the holy wine during the Eucharist.

Four strips join the upper border to the base of the cup via a series of clips; the cup is embellished with eight rock-crystal cabochons, one of which has been missing for some years. The strips meet in the centre where they hold the enamelled figure of a saint. A smooth knot below the base of the cup fixes it to a truncated cone by means of a divided ring decorated with brilliantly coloured enamel work. The cone broadens towards the base and is divided into four sections with figures. Strings of pearls separate and outline the sections containing enamel work.

Four bishops are depicted in the four trapezoidal panels of the foot. Of these, two are patriarchs of Constantinople: St Gregory of Nazianzos and St John Chrysostom, for both of whom the Byzantine Church nourished a special devotion; the other two are St Ignatios of Antioch and St Theophylaktos of Nikomedia. Portrayed in the four smaller enamelled circles are St Demetrios, St Prokopios, St Theodore and St Akindinos, all highly venerated in Constantinople and also represented in St Mark's Basilica, in mosaics and in the enamel work of the Pala d'Oro. The flat base of the inside of the cup bears a final cloisonné enamel depicting Christ raising his hand in blessing; in his left hand he holds the book of the Gospels, closed, in a jewel-studded binding.

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

## Book covers

Byzantium, late tenth–early eleventh centuries  
Gilded silver on wood, with gold cloisonné enamels, pearls and precious stones, 29 × 21 cm

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, inv. no. 100  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Haldon 1971, no. 36 (A. Grabar); Venice 1971, no. 36 (J. Fauriol); London 1971, no. 36 (M. E. Triantafyllidis); Venice 1971, no. 36 (New York 1971, no. 36 (A. Grabar)).

This pair of book covers is made of gilded silver, adorned with enamels. Each panel is centred on large enamels of Christ, on the front, who holds a copy of the Gospels and raises his right hand in blessing; and the Mother of God, on the back, who stands with her hands raised in prayer in the Orant pose. They are both surrounded by twelve smaller medallions of saints and prophets. All are framed by strings of pearls and precious stones. The medallions of the saints are no longer in their original locations, but it is possible to establish their original organisation as they were clearly designed as a series of pairs: the Archangels Michael and Gabriel; Anna and Joachim (the parents of Mary); Elizabeth and Zacharias (the parents of John the Baptist); twelve disciples made up of the leading Apostles Peter and Paul, the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), and six other Apostles (Andrew, Philip, Thomas, James, Bartholomew, Simon); four church fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzos, John Chrysostom, Nicholas); and two prophets, John the Baptist and Elijah. These saints are depicted throughout with the same blue halo with a red frame. Although the major saints are recognisable from their distinct physiognomies, others, such as Philip and Thomas, John and Matthew, Anna and Elizabeth, were made to almost identical designs with only the colour of the enamel changing to differentiate them.

The high financial value of the materials and workmanship is designed to match the spiritual value of the contents. The covers were probably originally designed for a Gospel-book, and the image of Christ may well be a visualisation of his description in the Gospel of St John as the incarnate logos (Word of God). The technique of the enamels allows the covers to be dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century. This book cover is one of a group of three that were reused in the fourteenth century to house a set of liturgical manuscripts, probably commissioned by Doge Andrea Dandolo, for the high altar of San Marco (Venice 1995, 23, cats 34–8), part of his larger campaign to embellish the dogal church.

ANTHONY EASTMOND

4.1  
At Home: Ceramics

## 83

Glazed large bowl with a representation of a bird

Second half of the twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 10 cm; diameter 27 cm; diameter of base 10.8 cm

Beside Museum, Athens, inv. no. 133.6  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Morgan 1935, no. 300, p. 202; Papanicolaou-Bakirtzi, Makridakis and Bakirtzi 1999, no. 153, p. 81.

The ceramic fabric is red and rather hard. The vase has a low ring base, a hemispherical body and an everted or outwardly folded rim with a beveled edge. On the white slip coating the inside is *sggraffito* and painted decoration. On the bottom, in fine *sggraffito*, is a medallion with a bird between stems. The bird turns to the right and pecks at an ivy branch, and engraved behind it is a bent stem. The central medallion is encircled by an area of painted decoration in the form of a rinceau incorporated in triangular panels, executed in brownish purple and green. Around this is an engraved narrow band of running spiral. Painted around the ridge of the rim are clusters of brown and green brush strokes. A fine coat of colourless glaze covers the inside of the vase. Vases decorated with fine *sggraffito* and painted motifs have been found in various parts of the Byzantine world. Their places of production have yet to be identified.

DEMETRIA PAPANIKOLAOU-BAKIRTZI

## 84

Plate with lion attacking a deer

Mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 4.6 cm; diameter 23.5 cm; diameter of base 13.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. 50.5.A.33 (490)  
PROVENANCE: Found in 1920 off Pelagionia and Alonissos, two of the Sporades islands in the north-west Aegean, in the wreck of a twelfth-century ship transporting domestic pottery and millstones, now at Nea Anchialos in the northwestern of the archaeological site.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kriticos 1971, p. 175, fig. 9; Athens 1986, no. 276, p. 724; Thessaloniki 1999, no. 134, p. 123.

Small parts of the rim of this plate are missing. The base is formed in the thickness of the body, with a mere suggestion of a ring. The body has a flat bottom and vertical walls as a kind of straight rim. The inner and outer surfaces are coated with white slip. The decoration, excellently rendered and carefully executed, consists of a lion with luxuriant mane attacking a roe deer. The head of the lion is represented in frontal pose with its tongue turned upwards and ending in a heart-shaped finial. The body is indicated by spots, the mane by uniform imbrications and the hair on the legs by dots. Dots are used also to denote the pelt of the roe deer. In the field are schematic branches with pine cones. A pale-yellow, shiny glaze, slightly damaged, coats the plate inside and outside.

ASPASIA DINA

## 85

Large bowl

Mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height approx. 7.7 cm; diameter 20.6 cm; diameter of base 11.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. 50.5.A.33 (491)  
PROVENANCE: Found in 1920 off Pelagionia and Alonissos, two of the Sporades islands in the north-west Aegean, in the wreck of a twelfth-century ship transporting domestic pottery and millstones, now at Nea Anchialos, northwestern of the archaeological site.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1986, no. 275, p. 210; Thessaloniki 1999, no. 75, p. 127.

The bowl has survived intact, with flaking on the rim. The vase has a ring base and a deep body with slanting walls that form a straight rim in the upper part. The inside is coated with white slip. The carefully executed decoration consists of a medallion (tondo) occupying a large part of the bottom, within which a rinceau with palmette finial is developed on a ground of scales. Around the circumference of the medallion is rope pattern. At the centre of the bottom is a tiny hole, indicating the use of a pair of compasses. There is a pale-yellow glaze on the inside. The outside surface has been altered.

ASPASIA DINA

## 86

Plate with lioness

Mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 2.4 cm; diameter 23.5 cm; diameter of base 14.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. 50.5.A.33 (492)  
PROVENANCE: Found in 1920 off Pelagionia and Alonissos, two of the Sporades islands in the north-west Aegean, in the wreck of a twelfth-century ship transporting domestic pottery and millstones, now at Nea Anchialos in the northwestern of the archaeological site.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kriticos 1971, p. 181, fig. 7; Athens 1986, no. 276, pp. 233–5; Thessaloniki 1999, no. 143, p. 83.

Part of the body and about half the rim are missing. The base is formed in the thickness of the body, with a mere suggestion of a ring. The body has a flat bottom and vertical walls as a kind of straight rim. There is a coat of white slip on the inner surface and a thinner coat on the outer. The intricate decoration, excellently rendered and carefully executed, comprises a central medallion (tondo) enclosing an animal, possibly a lioness, moving to the left and turning its head backwards. At the tip of its tail is a foliate motif. Surrounding the animal are schematic stems and a heart-shaped leaf. The medallion, the field of which is filled with scales, is encircled by a narrow band of bead-and-reel (astragal) pattern, interrupted by four medallions with schematic saplings in *champlevé* technique. Around this is a wider concentric band with pseudo-Kufic motifs, schematic saplings, stems and scales in the field. At the centre of the bottom is a tiny hole, indicating the use of a pair of compasses. There is a particularly shiny yellowish glaze inside and outside.

ASPASIA DINA

## 87

Plate with siren on a bird

Corinth, mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height approx. 7.7 cm; diameter 20.6 cm; diameter of base 6.6 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. 10.12.03  
PROVENANCE: Found in 1947 during excavations for the construction of the present museum.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Morgan 1935, Morgan 1942, Sanders 2003, fig. 23.2.01 and table 23.3.

The decoration of this plate, executed in the so-called Measles technique, depicts a siren apparently standing on the back of a large bird, perhaps an ostrich. To the right is a fish. If the iconography referred to Byzantine song or narrative, the tradition has not survived.

The plate is made of very pale-brown clay with black-and-white inclusions. White slip has been thickly applied over the interior and over the lip outside. Figural *sggraffito* design was incised through the slip to reveal the body clay. The design has been highlighted with red slip dots. A pale-yellow lead glaze covers the interior surface.

GUY SANDERS

## 88

Plate with a deer and other animals

Corinth, Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly, 1180–1200  
Glazed ceramic, height 4 cm; diameter 22.9 cm; diameter of base 12.4 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. 10.12.03.003  
PROVENANCE: Found in the excavation of the North Market to the north of the Temple of Apollo, Corinth.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Morgan 1935, Morgan 1942, Sanders 2003, fig. 23.2.01 and table 23.3.

A deer, standing to the right, is depicted scratching its nose with its left hind foot. The background is filled with a vine and palmette scroll populated with two hares and two doves. All the animals appear to be wearing collars. Any significance the scene may have had is no longer obvious. The decoration and shape of the plate is similar to plates made in precious metals.

The plate is made of reddish-yellow fabric with fine red-and-white inclusions. White slip has been thickly applied over the interior and thinly washed over the exterior. A figural *champlevé* medallion was incised through the slip to reveal the body clay (this form of *champlevé* decoration precedes that of cat. 94). A pale-yellow lead glaze covers the interior surface.

Although the plate was once thought to be of local, Corinthian manufacture, recent unpublished research has identified phyllite inclusions, suggesting that it was possibly made in Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly.

GUY SANDERS

## 89

Jug with trefoil mouth

Ara, fourteenth century  
Ara, fourteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 22 cm; diameter of base 11 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Ioannina, Besenios Museum, Pergamon Archaeological Collection, inv. no. 48.320  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Papanicolaou and Triantafyllidis 1973, p. 215, figs 3–5; Papanicolaou 2001, p. 10, fig. 12.

Most of the mouth of this jug, an example of standard domestic ware in Late Byzantium, has been restored, and the body has been mended from numerous shards. It has a flat base, a fusiform body, a short cylindrical neck and a trefoil mouth. There is a strap handle from the neck to the mid-belly. The painted decoration in white slip comprises five large running spirals on the belly, with dots between them; similar decoration can be found on the mouth and in the zone near the base. On the handle there are oblique parallel lines. The glaze used is dark yellow.

POLYXENI DIMITRAKOPOULOU AND BARBARA PAPADOPOULOU

## 90

Fish-shaped perfume flask

Egypt, fifth–sixth centuries  
Copper alloy, cast, engraved, 14.8 × 8.4 cm

Beside Museum, Athens, inv. no. 15288  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Amsterdam 1987, p. 266, no. 140 (L. Bouras); Thessaloniki 1999, p. 132, no. 69 (A. Drakaki); Sydney 2003, p. 108, no. 70 (A. Drakaki); London 2007, p. 160, no. 73 (A. Drakaki).

The tail of the fish forms a quadrilateral base on which the vessel stands upright; the fish's mouth is also the mouth of the vessel. The surface realistically renders the overlapping scales of the fish. The loops on the upper side of the fins were presumably used for affixing a chain by which the vase was hung.

Fish-shaped vessels are known from Antiquity, with many examples from Pharaonic Egypt, but became particularly popular in Late Roman times when zoomorphic vessels proliferated (Riefstahl 1972, pp. 11–14; Boston 1967, no. 62 [G.M.A. Haufmann]; Eckardt 1999, pp. 66–8). There is an almost identical bronze flask in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and another in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which retains its original hanging chain (Münster 1983, no. 15). Comparable examples in clay or glass document their wide dissemination in this period. Lamps and mirrors are also found in the shape of fishes (Jerusalem 2000, p. 123).

The fish is among the earliest and commonest Christian symbols, because the Greek word for fish, ΙΧΘΥΣ (*ichthys*), is an acronym of the phrase Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτήρ (Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour). Its significance as a Christian symbol was reinforced by the numerous references to fish in the Gospels and primarily to two of Christ's miracles: the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Matthew XIV, 17–21) and the great catch of fish in Lake Galilee (Luke V, 1–7).



(Galavaris 1970, pp.57–8; Urbana-Champaign 1989, pp.22–3).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## 91

### Bowl with bird

Late twelfth–early thirteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 4.8 cm; diameter 14 cm;  
diameter of base 6.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities,  
Thessaloniki, Prefecture of Boeotia, inv. no. 03.084.1943  
PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Korkalios 1996, pp.28–9, pl.577; Thessaloniki 1999,  
nos.96, 50

This ceramic bowl has a low ring base and slightly convex walls ending in a rudimentarily formed rim. Thick white slip coats the inside and the edge of the rim outside, while a thinner slip coats the rest of the external surface, including the base.

Inside the vase, which is covered with yellowish glaze, is incised *sgraffito* decoration: a bird turned right placed freely in the field, surrounded by filling motifs in radiate arrangement.

CHARIS KOILAKOU

## 92

### Bowl with fish

Mid-twelfth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 5.4 cm; diameter 11.5 cm; diameter  
of base 5.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities,  
Prefecture of Boeotia, Thessaloniki, inv. no. 03.084.1944  
PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Korkalios 1996, pp.28–9, pl.52; Thessaloniki 1999,  
nos.5, 58

This ceramic bowl has a low ring base and thin slanting walls ending in a rudimentarily formed rim. Thick white slip coats the inside and the edge of the rim outside, while a thinner slip coats the rest of the external surface, including the base.

Inside the vase, which is covered with colourless glaze, is fine *sgraffito* decoration: at about the centre of the bottom is a fish with scaly body and open mouth, facing left and surrounded by forked motifs.

CHARIS KOILAKOU

## 93

### Glazed bowl with a representation of a dancer

Cyprus, Paphos area, first half of the thirteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 7.4 cm; diameter 15.3 cm; diameter  
of base 7.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13579  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1994, no. 693; Drandaki 1994, p.273;  
Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1994, pp.351–3; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1996, no. Paphos  
Workshop 75, p.107; Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikou and Bakirtzi 1999, no.335,  
p.161; Thessaloniki 2000, no.227, pp.207–4

The ceramic fabric is dark red and hard. The bowl has a slightly raised foot with an upward-turned ring base and a carinated body (one whose curve is punctuated by a sharp angle) with an

upright, curved rim. A dancer is represented in fine and incised *sgraffito* on the white slip coating the inside. The head and body are shown front on, while the feet and arms are turned to the right, in dance pose, and the figure holds with outstretched hands a kind of *knobla* (clappers or castanets) of lunate form. These are possibly the *phengia* to which Byzantine texts refer. The dancer has a round face crowned by curly hair, and large wide-open eyes. She – the sex of the dancer is not clear – wears a garment with an imbricated bodice and pleated skirt, whose flare conveys the dance movement. Inscribed in the field to the left of the figure is a cross-hatched disc. The dance scene on this Cypriot vase is similar to scenes of dancers and musicians found on ceramics at various sites in the Byzantine world. Brownish-yellow and green brush strokes add a touch of colour to the incised design. A slip-painted wavy line runs round the outside of the rim. The inside of the bowl has a green-tinged glaze, while the outside has a yellow glaze. It is possible to see at the bottom of the bowl scars from the use of a tripod still during firing.

Features such as the texture of the ceramic fabric and its shape and decoration place this vase among the products of the Paphos workshops in south-western Cyprus.

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

## 94

### Plate with two lovers in a garden

Corinth or Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly, 1200–30  
Glazed ceramic, height 4.5 cm; diameter 25.3 cm;  
diameter of base 11.1 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. 6-1934-0054  
PROVENANCE: part of a large dump of decorated glazed pottery found during the  
excavation of the South Basilica, Corinth  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Morgan 1975, Morgan 1976, Sanders 2005, fig.23.2.20  
and table 23.5; Maguire and Dauterman Maguire 2007, pp.153–6

A young man is shown on a folding seat with a crowned young woman, who sits on his lap. To the left is a tree, below them an ivy vine and to the right a rabbit or hare runs along the edge of the frame. As the rabbit is often found as a symbol for lust and fertility, the couple are perhaps lovers.

It has been suggested that the two lovers are the fictitious hero Digenis Akritas and the Amazon Queen Maximo. His exploits are narrated in a popular Byzantine epic poem. It has also been suggested that the composition is a satirical secular variation on the religious portrayal of the Virgin and Child.

The plate is made of reddish-brown fabric with red-and-white inclusions. White slip has been thickly applied over the interior and thinly washed over the exterior. A figural *champlevé* medallion was incised through the slip to reveal the body clay (this form of *champlevé* decoration is like that of cat.88). A pale-yellow lead glaze covers the interior surface.

Although the plate was once thought to be of

local, Corinthian manufacture, recent unpublished research has identified phyllite inclusions, suggesting that manufacture in Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly is a possibility.

GUY SANDERS

## 95

### Plate with animal

Late twelfth–early thirteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 5.6 cm; diameter 21 cm;  
diameter of base 9.1 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities,  
Athens, Prefecture of Boeotia, inv. no. 03.084.1331  
PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Korkalios 1996, pp.106–8, pl.62f; Thessaloniki 1999,  
nos.91, 64

This ceramic plate with ring base and shallow body with slanting walls and bevelled rim is coated with white slip, which is thicker on the inside than on the outside. The inside of the plate is decorated using the *champlevé* technique: at the centre of the bottom is a large tondo enclosing an equine. The animal moves to the right but turns its head behind in the opposite direction. A schematic stem in the field of the tondo completes the composition. A group of four concentric circles, interrupted at intervals by sheaves of vertical lines, encircles the tondo.

Shiny glaze enriched with copper oxides which impart a greenish-yellow hue coats the inside and the outside of the rim, trickling towards the base. At the centre of the bottom is a hole indicating the use of a pair of compasses.

CHARIS KOILAKOU

## 96

### Glazed small four-lobed bowl with a representation of a bird

Constantinople, eleventh century  
Glazed ceramic, height 8.7 cm; diameter 13 cm;  
diameter of base 5.7 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13571  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikou and Bakirtzi 1999, no.1,  
p.31; Thessaloniki 2000, no.355, p.324 (D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi)

The ceramic fabric is off white and hard. The vase has a low ring base, a calyx-shaped body and forms four lobes in the upper part. It has painted decoration and belongs to the group known as 'Polychrome Ware'. The bottom is filled by a representation of a bird, which moves to the left and turns its head backwards. It has a long curving neck, open raised wings and short legs. Dots on the neck and scale pattern on the body render the plumage. The inside of the bowl is decorated with a band in a meandering pattern, while the outside has a wide band of re-curving stem. The decoration is executed in vitreous pigments: golden yellow, greenish blue and viscous white. Both the greenish blue and the white pigment are now altered. Black-purple paint is used for the outlines.

Polychrome Ware vases are perhaps the most frequently discussed examples of Byzantine ceramics. They were produced in workshops in Constantinople and have been found in small numbers at various places in the Byzantine world, mainly in important administrative and commercial centres, such as Corinth and Thessaloniki. However, they have been noted also in remote areas, such as the monastic centre on Mount Papikon on the slopes of the Rodopi mountain range in western Thrace.

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

## 97

### Glazed small bowl with a representation of a double-headed eagle

Late thirteenth or fourteenth century  
Glazed ceramic, height 7 cm; diameter 12 cm;  
diameter of base 4.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13599

SELECTED REFERENCES: Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikou and Bakirtzi 1999,  
no.274, p.154

The ceramic fabric is red and hard. The vase has a low flaring base, a hemispherical body and a rim with a serrated edge. *Sgraffito* decoration is found on the white slip coating the inside and the upper part of the outside of the bowl: depicted at the bottom is a double-headed eagle in its familiar heraldic form, with one head facing East and the other turned to the West. It is executed in medium-point *sgraffito*, while at some points *champlevé* technique is used. It is not known precisely when the double-headed eagle motif appeared, but its association with the Palaiologan dynasty is accepted. Representations of the double-headed eagle are encountered not only on pottery but also in sculpture, miniatures and other media. A vase in the Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, is decorated with a *sgraffito* double-headed eagle and is dated to the fourteenth century (Thessaloniki 1999, no.83, p.79).

A pair of parallel lines runs around the inside of the rim, while around the outside is another pair of parallel lines, intersecting with parallel oblique lines. The interior of the bowl has a yellow glaze, characteristic of vases of the Late Byzantine period. The upper part of the exterior bowl has a green glaze. Scars from the use of tripod still during firing are visible at the bottom of the bowl.

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

## 4.2

### At Home: Metalwork

## 98

### Bucket

Eastern Mediterranean, sixth century  
Hammered, chased and punched brass, height, including  
handle 21 cm; diameter 17.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13533  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Delavantes and Fotopoulou 1997, pp.178–4, nos.103, 306;  
Thessaloniki 2000, p.172, no.198 (A. Drandaki); Drandaki 2002, pp.17, 133;  
Kortzani 2002, pp.55, 20; Arce 2005, pp.141–50; Eshon 2005, p.129, no.77  
(A. Drandaki)

This brass, cylindrical bucket or *situla* was made by hammering from a single sheet of metal and now has a green, and in some places brown, patina. Two lugs, fixed to either side of the rim, have holes in the middle for attaching the handle, which is made from a strong, curved, polygonal rod. On the exterior are three bands of decoration. The upper band bears the Greek inscription: ΥΓΙΕΝΩΝ ΧΡΩ ΚΥΡΙ(Ε) ΕΝ ΠΟΛΛΟΙΣ CE ΧΡΟΝΟΙΣ ΚΕ ΚΑΛΟΙΣ ΕΥΤΥΧΩΣ (Use this in good health, master, for many good years happily). In the wide central band is a hunting scene with five figures in groups, chasing a lioness and a leopard respectively: trees, plants and a hunting dog complete the scene. The lower band has triangular geometric patterns.

The bucket is similar to other vessels, distinctive for their uniform shape, identical techniques in manufacture and ornamentation, and common epigraphic elements in the letter forms and in the content of the inscriptions (Mundell Mango et al. 1989, pp.295–311; Mundell Mango 1995, pp.263–82; Drandaki 2002; Arce 2005, pp.141–58). Their provenance – where known – ranges from Mesopotamia and Palestine to East Anglia and Spain. Epigraphy and decoration point to a date in the sixth century and a manufacture in the Eastern Mediterranean. The buckets' inscriptions and ornament suggest a domestic use, with one exception, which is decorated with crosses and bears a dedicatory inscription indicating an ecclesiastical use, probably for holy water (Deichmann and Peschlow 1977, pp.39–40).

These buckets were designed to carry water and were probably part of the *instrumenta balnei* (bathing equipment). It is possible that they were part of a set with jugs, like for example, a copper-alloy jug in Trier, whose technique, decoration and inscription are identical (Scholl 1994, p.231, pl.xixa–b; Drandaki 2002, p.49). Such sets are also known from silver examples like those in the Sevso treasure (Mundell Mango and Bennett 1994, pp.319–401).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## 99

### Spoon with inscription

Byzantium, early seventh century  
Beaten silver, turned (the handle) and nielloed (monogram and  
inscription), 21.9 × 3.9 cm; bowl diameter 1.9 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2394  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lazovic et al. 1977, pp.25–6, no.12; Baratte 1992, p.39,  
note 14

This silver spoon is in good condition and bears the same monogram as the silver bowl decorated with niello work, also now in the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva (inv. no. AD 2384; see Lazovic et al. 1977, pp.24–25 and 39–40, no.12). We can assume, therefore, that it is part of the same service; the two pieces were acquired by the museum at the same time.

The bowl is connected to the handle, which has a lion's head at its end, by a circular monogrammed disk. At the bowl end of the handle, below the lion's head, an inscription is engraved in niello: ΦΑΙΤΟΥΣΦΑΙΟΥΣ (Love your friends). The spoon stands comparison with examples adorned with a boar's head, which suggests a secular use (Baratte 1992, p.5). However, study of the monogram has revealed that it refers not to a name, but to a well-known invocation: ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΩ(ΗΘΗ) (Saviour come to our aid) (Lazovic et al. 1977, p.37), which, although not linking the spoon to any specifically liturgical function, connects it at least to a recipient eager to affirm his or her Christian faith.

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

## 100

### Spoon with flat handle

Byzantium, sixth century (?)  
Silver, 14.6 × 5.3 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2399  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lazovic et al. 1977, pp.11 and 27, no.15

This simple spoon has some decoration engraved on its handle, which depicts a naked shepherd holding a lamb in his arms. The figure, in profile and represented in a popular manner, cannot be interpreted as the Good Shepherd, a symbol of Christ, since he is depicted completely naked. The figure does, however, wear an earring, a prophylactic intended to protect the first male child and sometimes used for the Infant Jesus, as can be seen on a fresco in the Monastery of Marko, in Susica, near Skopje (1377–81) (Lazovic in Lazovic et al. 1977, p.11), or for other saints in a number of mid-Byzantine frescoes (Sophocleous 1994, no.12b, pp.82 and 136), including the icon of St James the Persian in Kato Paphos, dating from the late twelfth century. Like another spoon decorated with a victorious athlete and now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, the shepherd reflects the bucolic themes of Greco-Roman Antiquity (Baratte 1992, p.12). It can be assumed that this is an object for secular use, and it shows







circumstances of its burial: was it the pay of a Roman soldier living at the northern frontier, or was it the booty of brigands?

ROBIN CORMACK

## 115

Silver-gilt weight from the reign of Theodora

Constantinople, between 11 January 1055 and 31 August 1056  
Silver, gilt, niello, diameter 3.28 cm; weight 32.96 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, no. 1992.5.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *Enlente and Cowell* 1994, pp. 91–3, 96, 97–8; *Adams* 2000, no. 43, p. 364; C. Enlente

The obverse is decorated with a nimbed bust of the Virgin Blachernitissa wearing a tunic and *maphorion* and a Greek inscription: ΟΥΤΙΑΜΙΑ (ὀύγγια μία, 1 oz.). The reverse's centre, which is in the form of a raised medallion, is struck with a bust of the empress Theodora wearing a crown with cross and pendilia, a pearl collar, and a *liras*. In her left hand she holds a sceptre decorated with pellets, and in her right a *globus cruciger*. Around the edge of the weight is a partly nielloed inscription: ΘΕΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΑ ΑΥΤΟΥΤΤΗ ΠΟΡΦΥΡ/ΓΕΝΗΤΟ (Θ[εοτό]κε βοήθει Θεοδώρα αὐτοῦττῇ [τῇ] πορφύρ[τῃ] γεν[ε]τήτῃ; Mother of God, protect Theodora Augusta Porphyrogeneta). Much of the original gilding has been lost.

The empress Theodora ruled for two brief periods in the mid-eleventh century: the first with her sister Zoe between 20 April and 11 June 1042, the second from the death of Constantine IX on 11 January 1055 to her death on 31 August 1056. Coin parallels suggest that the weight belongs to her second reign (Grierson 1973, pp. 752–3, pl. LXII). The appearance of the Virgin Blachernitissa on mid-eleventh century coins may be connected with the sexcentenary celebrations of the church of the Blachernae in Constantinople, which had been founded and built around 450. The inscription on the obverse of this weight is problematic, suggesting as it does that the eleventh-century pound weighed approximately 396 g, a figure far in excess of that proposed by Schilbach in his comprehensive study on Byzantine metrology (Schilbach 1970, pp. 166–8). Possibly this is not a commodity weight at all, but some form of imperial donative.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 116

One-pound commodity weight with two emperors

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century  
Lead-brass, 6.9 × 6.2 cm; weight 323.76 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, no. 1959.12.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *Dalton* 1901, no. 485, p. 97; *Entwistle* 2006, pp. 277–33

The weight is engraved on the face with two imperial figures standing slightly to right. Each emperor is diademed and nimbate, wears a

cuirass, paludamentum fastened by a stylised fibula, pteruges and open-toed boots and holds a spear in his left hand and an imbricated shield in his right. In the bottom right corner is the figure of a leopard with backward-turned head with, above it, a tree, the lower branches of which terminate in berries, the upper in round fruit. At centre bottom is the denominational mark for one pound. Parts of the shields, cuirasses, paludamenta, sleeves and boots are inlaid with copper, the emperors' faces, hands, legs, denominational mark and leopard's head with silver.

The Byzantines employed a duodecimal weight system for weighing both coins and commodities. The basic unit of this system was the Byzantine pound (*libra*), derived from the Late Roman pound, which appears on weights as the Greek letter lambda Λ (or ↑). The *libra* was divided into twelve ounces, the ounce into multiples of the *scripulum*, which, at 1.13 g, was the smallest unit of the libral system. The *libra* was also divisible into 72 *solidi*: the *solidus*, later known as the *nomisma*, was the standard gold coin introduced by Constantine the Great in 309, which was to retain its weight and fineness well into the tenth century. In addition to providing the weight with legitimacy, the two emperors symbolise the political unity of the empire at a time when it was split between western and eastern halves for administrative purposes.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 117

One-pound commodity weight with imperial figures

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century  
Lead-brass, 5.6 × 5.8 cm; weight 318.11 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, no. 1960.6.13  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *London* 1994, no. 32, p. 49; C. Entwistle; *Entwistle* 2006, figs 2 and 4

The front is engraved with a square frame enclosing two frontal imperial busts, diademed and wearing paludamenta. On either side of the frame is the draped figure of a tyche, appearing to support the frame with an outstretched arm; above each tyche is a cross. The tyche on the right has a mural crown and holds a torch in her right hand. Between the tyches is a kneeling, half-nude, female figure with arms akimbo; beneath her left arm is a shield and, flanking her head, is the denominational mark for one pound. The crosses, tyches' faces, arms and parts of their drapery, the kneeling figure's face and arms, the mark and emperors' faces are inlaid with silver (four of the faces modern restorations); the emperors' diadems and paludamenta, the frame, torch, crown of the left-hand tyche, parts of the tyches' and woman's drapery are inlaid with copper.

The arrangement of two imperial busts within an icon-like frame is paralleled on another weight in the Menil Collection, Houston; here, though, two personifications, perhaps of the abundance of earth and sea, recline beneath the frame (Nesbitt forthcoming, no. A.311.10). There are no known parallels for the kneeling female figure on other Late Antique weights and her significance in this context is unclear. Professor Cyril Mango (pers. comm.) has suggested that the figure may be Ge (Tellus), although representations of her on mosaics, silver and medallions tend to show her either as a bust or as a recumbent figure (Parrish 1984, no. 13, pp. 122–5; New York 1979, no. 164, pp. 185–6). Ge would, however, as a symbol of abundance, be an appropriate motif for a weight. The two tyches presumably represent Rome and Constantinople.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 118

One-pound commodity weight with imperial figures

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century  
Gunmetal, 6.7 × 6.1 cm; weight 323.71 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, no. 1960.6.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *London* 1994, no. 32, p. 49; C. Entwistle; *Entwistle* 2006, fig. 3

The front is engraved with two imperial figures standing slightly to the right. Each emperor is diademed and nimbate, wears a cuirass, paludamentum fastened by a stylised fibula, pteruges and calf-length boots, and holds a spear in his left hand and an oval shield in his right. In the bottom right corner is the figure of a rearing lion with backward-turned head with, above it, a tree whose branches terminate in five-petalled blossoms. In the bottom left corner, within a square frame, is the denominational mark for one pound; above the head of the left-hand emperor, a cross. The cross, figures' faces, hands and legs, shield bosses, mark and the face of the lion are inlaid with silver, parts of the sleeves, paludamenta and boots with copper.

The composition of two standing emperors attacking an animal or animals is common on Late Antique weights (see also cat. 115). A one-pound weight in the Menil Collection, Houston, provides a particularly close parallel, although the figures there are depicted within an elaborate architectural framework (New York 1979, no. 324, p. 343). The figures on the above weight have often been erroneously described as military saints (either St Demetrios or St George, or St Theodore Stratelates and St Theodore Tiro), but cuirass, diadem and paludamenta fastened by fibulae are specifically imperial attributes in this period.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 4.3 At Home: Jewellery and Adornment

### 119

Gold pendant

Eastern Mediterranean or southern Baltic, Early Byzantine, sixth–seventh century  
Gold foil, gilt copper-alloy pins, diameter 9.5 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Purchase, the Adolph D. and William C. Williams Fund, 1875  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *Konrad* 1977, Richmond 1994, pp. 108–11, no. 37; *Ross* 2005

This unusual pendant is composed of two sheets of gold foil laid over a fill material (largely of calcium carbonate with a resin binder). At the centre of the front side is a medallion with the bust of a winged female holding up a cloth filled with fruit. She is surrounded by a band of twelve medallions; the four medallions on the axes contain equal armed crosses and the other eight contain busts of an emperor in profile, echoing the conventions of design for obverses in Roman coinage. The back of the pendant is chased with an eight-pointed star, each segment of which is filled with a stylised leaf pattern.

The pendant is fitted with two loops at the top for suspension, but the fragility of the thin foil suggests that this piece of jewellery was not intended for everyday wear, but probably served as a funerary adornment. The use of imperial busts can be traced to a Late Roman fashion for numismatic jewellery which involved setting actual gold coins and medallions (or imitations of them) into the most sumptuous gold jewellery (belts, necklaces, bracelets). The foliate decoration of the reverse side finds its closest parallel in the reverse of an inlaid garnet pendant from the Olbia treasure in South Russia, now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (Ross 2005, pp. 117–19, cat. 166). The female bust with fruit is close to contemporary representations of Ge, the personification of Earth, found on jewellery, textiles and mosaics of the Eastern Mediterranean. The abundance of the earth, along with the symbols of the Cross, and the imperial busts, unite in this unique and inventive composition to evoke many types of guardians, undoubtedly serving as an amulet for a wealthy deceased woman who lived, perhaps, on the north-eastern borders of the empire.

CHRISTINE KONDOLEON

### 120

Necklace

c. 330–350

Gold, precious stones (twelve missing), 12.8 × 22.8 cm; plaques 2.6 × 2.2 cm

N. P. Goudaridis Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens, inv. no. 2.458.1  
PROVENANCE: Polis Chrysothous (ancient Maron), Paphos District, Cyprus  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *Grabar* 1968, pl. 205; *Metzger* 1980, Oliver 1986; *Niemeyer* 1997, *Tasson-Brown* 1997, p. 46; *Veroulanou* 1999, no. 31, p. 908; *Lubsen-Admiral* 2004, no. 692, pp. 975, 318–17

Six rectangular openwork plaques with fine scrolls and sapphires in oval settings alternate with pairs of figure-of-eight elements, each consisting of emeralds and garnets mounted in settings separated by pearls threaded on gold wire. A seventh openwork plaque mounted with a rectangular emerald and with a pendant below forms the central element.

This necklace is a fine example of the openwork technique (Lubsen-Admiral 2004, no. 692, p. 316) often called *opus interraile*, a term originating with Pliny (N.H. 33.94), although the Greek term *diatritos* ('pierced') is more accurate (Ogden and Schmidt 1990, pp. 5–8, 10–12). It encompasses a distinctive variety of jewellery encountered in Mediterranean regions from the third century to the seventh, characterised by thin pierced sheets of gold (Ogden 1982, pp. 34, 43), creating a lace-like effect, often combined with precious stones. Although the production centres remain unidentified, the distribution of types attests to innovations introduced by goldsmiths, who continued to draw on the Hellenistic, Roman and Near Eastern traditions for shapes and motifs (Veroulanou 1999, no. 31, pp. 15–27, 90, 191–7).

The necklace from Cyprus has been interpreted as a diadem based on fourth-century representations (Grabar 1968, pl. 209) or as an ornament sewn onto a ceremonial robe (Metzger 1980, pp. 4–5). This view, supported by the absent clasps, the presence of side holes, wire frames and incised Greek letters at the back of the elements (Niemeyer 1997, p. 192), is corroborated by its recovery from a tomb together with other jewellery (Oliver 1996, p. 140) and personal items attributed to a woman of some rank.

MARIA DHOGA-TOLI

### 121

The Berlin Collar

Second half of the sixth or first half of the seventh century  
Gold, emeralds, sapphires, one amethyst, pearls, diameter 23 cm

Städtische Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 3009, 305  
PROVENANCE: acquired as part of the so-called Antioch treasure, Cairo, 1909 (formerly in the von Gabl Collection)  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *Zahn* 1923, *Dennison* 1928, pp. 146–9, no. 14; *Niemeyer* 1997, *Niemeyer* 1998, *Stolz* 2002

The Berlin Collar is the only broad collar with pendants to have survived from the Early Byzantine period. The technique, the elaborate motifs of its pierced work and its settings all suggest that it dates from the second half of the sixth or the first half of the seventh century. A dating to this period is corroborated by the dates of a necklace (cat. 125) and a pair of bracelets from the same treasure: they were probably made as a set together with the collar, that is in the same workshop at around the same time (Veroulanou 1999, no. 228, p. 245).

Based on the evidence gathered from images, broad collars with pendants like the Berlin piece

were reserved for Constantinople and Roma, Maria and Agnes (personifications of Constantinople and Rome, and the Virgin and St Agnes) in imperial attire, and female members of the imperial family from the early fifth century onwards. It is thus possible that broad collars with pendants were considered regalia at the time the Berlin Collar was made.

Richly decorated with emeralds, hyacinths (sapphires, one amethyst) and pearls, the Berlin Collar stands out among other pieces of jewellery from the same period. According to literary sources and images, these materials typically appear on regalia. Although the use of emeralds, hyacinths and pearls on normal pieces of jewellery was not forbidden, an edict from the later fifth century states that these materials should not be attached to, and had to be removed from, certain pieces of jewellery, most probably regalia. The same edict also decrees that regalia and imperial jewellery should be made in the palatine workshops.

The shape of the Berlin Collar and its materials may therefore suggest that it functioned as a regalia for a female member of the imperial family and that it was made in Constantinople.

VIVIANE STOLZ

### 122

Necklace

Constantinople (?), seventh century  
Gold, length 55.5; diameter of medallions 2.5 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. 1999/2.4/1  
PROVENANCE: probably from Lambousa (Kyrenia District); purchase from Mr. Neophytos Moutakas  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *Pierides* 1971, p. 32, pl. xxv; *Karageorghis* 1962, p. 29, pl. xxv

This gold necklace is composed of nineteen medallions linked to each other by loops. The medallions are decorated with scrolls and cross-shaped ornaments in a pierced openwork technique. The two ends are fastened by hook and loop. The openwork technique is found in other precious jewellery of this period. It is quite probable that the necklace was buried in Lambousa during the Arab raids on the city in 653 and 654.

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS

### 123

Necklace

Antioch, Egypt, fifth century  
Gold with sapphires, amethysts, emeralds and pearls, length 42.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 278  
SELECTED REFERENCES: *Segal* 1968, no. 875, p. 143, pl. 43; *Dallat* 1990, p. 73, pl. 55; *Georgiadou* 1999, no. 110, pp. 304–6

The gold chain is strung with beads of sapphire, amethyst, emerald and pearls. Between the beads and beside each link of the chain are small spacer beads of gold. The hook and the loop for fastening



the necklace are attached to the terminals by plain gold discs.

Necklaces of this type have been found in treasures or hoards, buried by their owners during a period of invasions and now important evidence for studying and for dating pieces of jewellery. The closest parallel for the Benaki Museum necklace is in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC, and comes from the Piazza della Consolazione treasure, discovered in Rome (Ross 1965, no. 18, pls B and I). Beads of precious stones and pearls alternate in the same manner on the chain, and there are likewise small gold spacer beads adjacent to each stone. Pieces of jewellery from the treasure, now dispersed in various collections, are dated to the early fifth century. The similarity of the necklace to a comparable piece from a particularly significant treasure found at Carthage, now in the British Museum, London (Inv. no. MLA AF 323-330, Tait 1986, p. 98, pl. 220) confirms this dating. The plain little discs connecting the hook and the loop of the fastening occur on a necklace from the Assiut treasure in Egypt (Dennison 1918, no. 13, pl. XXXII). Similar discs on later examples of the sixth and seventh centuries are usually of filigree or pierced work.

Necklaces strung with rows of precious-stone beads seem to have been a basic item of adornment of every empress or wife of a high official, as attested by the depiction of Empress Theodora and her retinue in the mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna (fig. 30), as well as by other representations on coins and ivories (see the consular diptych of Stilicho; Volbach 1961, pl. 62). Furthermore, the copious use of precious stones in jewellery of the period bears witness to the flourishing trade with the Orient, particularly with the Indies and Ceylon.

ADILIA YEROLANOU

## 124

### Chain necklace

Byzantium, sixth–seventh century  
Gold and semi-precious stones, length 45.7 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 54.544  
PROVENANCE: purchased by D. Keldian with two other pieces of gold chain jewellery, all said to be from Fayum, 1909  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Baltimore 1986, no. 439, pp. 155, 157; New York 1984, no. 106, p. 110; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 53, pp. 47, 48, 121 (fig. 254), 213

This necklace represents a tradition in early Byzantium, rooted deeply in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, for the display of wealth and social status (Brown 1984; Urbana-Champaign 1989, pp. 1–22, 32–3, 159–61; Walker in New York 2000; Ross 2005, pp. 1–70). The gold-wire chain links a varying alternation of shaped and coloured beads between terminal cross-medallions at the ends. Details include, at the clasp, tiny convex dots of gold wire, flattened underneath to reinforce points of contact, and links twisted to make each segment a figure of eight stretched straight for threading in the middle, and bent at

both ends into hooks that twist into opposed right-angle planes.

Pearls, highly prized by the Byzantines, begin the sequence at the clasp medallions. Pearls at this time were associated with light itself, with Christ, and sometimes with Aphrodite, who is secularised in popular culture (MacCoul 1988, pp. 68–76 and 147–50; Ross 2005, no. 12, pp. 18–19; Terry and Maguire 2007, pp. 139–40). The pearls are used to create space between amethysts of two tones, like watered and unwatered wine, a stone named in antithesis to drunkenness; in a similar way emerald-like glass beads of a colour associated with verdure and esteemed for its protection of women's health are placed in repeated near-pairings of shapes and colours across the span of the wearer's neck.

The gesture of closing the necklace and the protective design of its floral cross terminals links and binds physical securing with spiritual security: faith flowering into eternal life. They point to the Byzantine adoption of the Egyptian lotus, the flower that rises from the Nile, with life-giving divine associations (Ross 2005, p. 11; Rudolph 1995, no. 82a and pl. 283; Urbana-Champaign 1999, no. A18, pp. 34ff and 61).

EUNICE DAUTERMAN MAGUIRE

## 125

### Gold necklace with sapphires and emeralds

Probably Constantinople, late sixth–early seventh century  
Gold, emerald, sapphire, sardonyx, pearls, length 79 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 30119, 5061  
PROVENANCE: purchased by D. Keldian with two other pieces of gold chain jewellery, all said to be from Fayum, 1909  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Baltimore 1986, no. 439, pp. 155, 157; New York 1984, no. 106, p. 110; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 53, pp. 47, 48, 121 (fig. 254), 213

The necklace consists of 28 elements. The centrepiece is a mounted sardonyx cameo with the head of the goddess Artemis, which is probably contemporary with the necklace (Spier 2007, p. 140, cat. 768). Fourteen six-petalled flowers in openwork technique (*opus interrasile*) alternate with near rectangular emeralds in bezel settings and oval sapphires in claw settings, each surrounded by rows of pearls. Even though framing strings of pearls appeared from the third century until after Byzantium, the *opus interrasile* elements clearly mark this piece as Early Byzantine. Also typical for this period is the use of sapphires and emeralds, while in the Middle Byzantine period precious stones were usually replaced by colourful enamels.

However, the precise dating is debated. The necklace is part of the so-called Assiut treasure (see cats 121, 127), whose 36 pieces were apparently collected over a long period and date from the fourth to the seventh centuries. Although coins on other pieces (such as cat. 127) provide a *terminus ad* or *post quem*, this necklace lacks internal clues for dating. It can only be dated through stylistic and technical comparison. In fact, very few pieces of

Early Byzantine jewellery can be dated reliably. Platz-Horster and Yeroulanou suggested a date around 500, while Stolz recently placed it in the same workshop as cat. 121, which she dates convincingly on the basis of analyses of settings and style of the pierced work to the late sixth to early seventh centuries.

The necklace is unique in its combination of round *opus interrasile* elements and mounted precious stones. Circular openwork discs were quite common as necklace (or body chain) elements and clasps, but either alternate with unmounted precious stones such as amethysts, sapphires or emeralds, or consist entirely of openwork discs (for example, Georgoula 1999, p. 301, fig. 217; London 1994, no. 97).

ANTJE BOSSELMANN-RUCKBIE

## 126

### Gold body-chain

Byzantine, sixth–early seventh century AD  
Gold, length 72 cm; diameter of large medallions 7.78 cm; weight 643.2 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, ex. 1967.7.4  
PROVENANCE: found in Egypt  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dennison 1918, no. 13, London 1972, no. 163; London 1994, no. 97; Munich 2004, no. 493

This outstanding piece of jewellery is one of 36 objects, ranging in date from the third century AD or earlier to the seventh, allegedly found in Middle Egypt, either near Assiut or at Shékh Abáda (Antinopolis), before 1909.

The ornament consists of four chains that passed over the shoulders and under the arms of the wearer, crossing on the chest and back, where they are joined to large openwork gold medallions, pierced in the goldworking technique often referred to as *opus interrasile*. Each chain consists of a linked series of 23 small openwork discs, of two patterns, namely a quatrefoil enclosing four cinquefoils, and an eight-petalled rosette containing alternating trefoil and spear-head motifs within the petals. These two designs recur in the large medallions, each of which incorporates one central and six surrounding discs.

The chain, unlike that from the Hoxne treasure (cat. 131), is large enough to have been slipped over the head by an adult woman. Loose body-chains of this kind and small, closely fitted ones, are both depicted in Roman art.

CATHERINE JOHNS

## 127

### Gold necklace with pendant

Probably Egypt, late sixth–early seventh century  
Gold, diameter of necklace 23.5 cm; height of pendant 11.7 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 30119, 5061/5062  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dennison 1918, no. 13, 4; Künzelsau 1995, no. Fy (8); Deppert-Lippitz 1995, no. 205 (G. Platz-Horster); New York 1984, no. 106, p. 110; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 53, pp. 47, 48, 121 (fig. 254), 213; London 1994, no. 97; Munich 2004, no. 493 (G. Platz-Horster); Stolz 2007, pp. 334–4, 397–3 and 399, pl. 452–3; Stolz forthcoming

This heavy necklace (547 g) consists of a torque holding an ensemble of fourteen coins from the reigns of Justinian I (527–65) to Maurice (582–602), and a disc with the Greek words ΦΩΣ (light) and ΖΩΗ (life; the counterpart is lost). In the centre is an imitation imperial medallion representing an emperor, possibly Constantine the Great, with a personification of the city of Constantinople on the reverse. Both sides bear the blessing inscription KY(P)E BOHΘ(E)I TH ΦΟΡΟΥCA (Lord, help the wearer). The female ending indicates that this necklace was worn by a woman. The broad *opus interrasile* frame of the circular pendant surrounds a medallion showing the Annunciation and the Wedding at Cana on the reverse.

The necklace is part of the so-called Assiut treasure, which consists of 36 high-quality pieces of gold jewellery adorned with pearls, sapphires and emeralds, dating from the fourth to the seventh centuries and probably buried in the middle of the seventh century (see cats 121, 125). Among them is a counterpart for this necklace (Lawton 1983, p. 182; Künzelsau 1995, no. F2), probably forming a pair for a married couple, most likely made on the occasion of their wedding. The latest coins provide a clue to its dating to the late sixth to early seventh century. A similar but smaller pendant (7.64 cm) has also been identified as wedding jewellery, perhaps for the marriage of a daughter of Emperor Tiberios in 582 (Munich 2004, no. 505), but, according to recent research, it was most likely made for a non-imperial couple (Stolz forthcoming).

The provenance of this necklace is uncertain: Platz-Horster (2004, p. 286) argues for courtly circles of Constantinople, considering the quality and value, as well as the imperial and religious iconography. However, Stolz (2007, pp. 556–7) convincingly suggests production in Egypt, especially because of the three-petalled rosettes, which appear mostly on jewellery found or said to have been found in Egypt.

ANTJE BOSSELMANN-RUCKBIE

## 128

### Gold coin-set pendant

Eastern Mediterranean (?), mid- to late fourth century AD  
Gold, diameter 9.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, ex. 1984.9.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Buckton 1983, pp. 15–20; London 1994, no. 2, pp. 96–7 (C. Entwistle)

In the centre of this gold hexagonal openwork pendant with suspension loop is a double-*solidus* of Constantine the Great (306–37), with a profile bust of him on the obverse, and the confronted busts of his two sons Crispus (died 326) and Constantine II (337–40) in imperial costume on the reverse. Inscriptions on the reverse indicate that the coin was struck at the mint of Sirmium

(present-day Sremska Mitrovica, in Serbia) in 321. Surrounding the coin are six exquisitely executed tondo busts in high relief. They are (from top right clockwise): a female wearing a tiara and veil; a bearded male; a female with crown tress; a male wearing a Phrygian cap; another female with crown tress; and, finally, a male wearing a fillet.

The pendant is one of five perhaps from the same necklace: a further hexagonal and a circular example are now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC; a second, slightly damaged, circular example is in the Louvre, Paris, and, finally, the largest of them all, an octagonal example is in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio (Deppert-Lippitz 1995, pp. 30–60). Despite the care taken in the individualisation of the busts – noticeable in their hairstyles and physiognomy – both their identification and the reconstruction of the iconographical programme behind them has proved elusive. Only one of the above busts, that of Attis with his Phrygian cap, can be identified with any degree of certainty. Dating the pendants has proved equally problematic. A very closely related gold mount in the British Museum, London, was purportedly found with six gold aurei of Constantius II (337–61), leading to a proposal of the middle of the fourth century for the pendant's manufacture (Buckton 1983–84, pp. 15–20). More recently, on the basis of comparisons of the tondo busts with Theodosian metalwork, a date in the later fourth century has been suggested (Ross 2005, pp. 147–9 [Boyd]).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 129

### Gold pendant cross with Christ, the Virgin, St John and two saints

Egypt (?), 600–70  
Gold, 8 × 5.3 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, Byzantine Collection, 82.1937.24  
PROVENANCE: Konstantin, Frankfurt 1901, Hackenbrock, Frankfurt; Mr and Mrs Robert Woods Bliss, Washington DC, 1927; Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1940  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Rosenberg 1920, Peirce and Tyler 1924, v. 2, p. 107, note 27; Werner 1936, p. 183; Swarczewski 1941, pp. 77–78; Dumbarton Oaks 1953, no. 38, p. 78, pl. p. 92; Wood 1960, pp. 99–104, pl. 2, fig. 5; Ross 1966, no. 15, pp. 21–2, pl. 23; Dumbarton Oaks 1969, no. 179, p. 51; Baldwin 1978, p. 335; New York 1979, no. 301, p. 331; Deppert-Lippitz 1995, pp. 205–6, fig. 477; Providence 1984, no. 52, p. 144; Verelstael 1997, pp. 129–31, 134, pl. 26; Kelly and Quinn 1999, pp. 87, 79, pl. 24

This hollow cross was formed first by beating a sheet of gold over a sculpted form, and then soldering it to a flat piece for the back. The assigned date is derived from a technical observation: there is a small triangular flap cut into the rear panel in a technique known from other Late Antique jewellery to provide a vent to allow gases to escape during soldering (Rosenberg 1928, pp. 151, 152). The fact that the cross bears a stylistic and iconographic resemblance to another in Cairo (Werner 1936, p. 183) has led to a tentative attribution to Egypt.

Christ stands in the centre with arms outstretched, revealing nail holes in his hands and feet. The four holy figures in the medallions on

the arms of the cross are not labelled, although the cruciform star on the veil of the woman at the top identifies her as the Virgin. The bearded figure at the bottom is probably John the Baptist. Although Christ may appear to be crucified, given the nail holes and the rectangular sign over his head inscribed IC XC, analysis of certain significant details has shown that the image is more complicated (Wessell 1960, pp. 99–104). For example, although there are nail holes, there are no nails. Christ's head is erect and his eyes open. He wears, not the colobion, the long, sleeveless garment of the earliest Crucifixion images from the fifth and sixth centuries, but the tunic and pallium, an ensemble relating to his earliest incarnation as a young teacher or ruler. He is, moreover, youthful and beardless. All of this suggests that the image portrays not Christ crucified, nor again the living Christ, but the eternal Christ, triumphant and bearing the marks of his passion.

JOHN HANSON

## 130

### Chain

Sixth–seventh centuries

Gold, length of chain 91 cm; length of pendant 2.3 cm; width 3.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, 830.079  
PROVENANCE: from Ksergion, Mytilene, Lesbos  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavrisas 1954, p. 327, no. 11, fig. 1; Athens 1964, no. 391, pp. 364–65; Thessaloniki 1997A, no. 227, p. 200 (C. Baltesanu); Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 225, no. 2, fig. 14; Thessaloniki 2002, no. 654, pp. 477–8 (C. Meramvriatou); Tzoungoulou and Chalkia forthcoming

The chain consists of 60 circular links, 1.4 cm in diameter, which are concatenated by figure-eight rings. At one terminal is a hook, while at the other is a pendant, the lower side of which is double-arched, with a pair of leaves hanging from each of the resultant three points. On the front of the pendant is a pierced-work representation of confronted peacocks, on either side of a 'Tree of Life'. This is one of the most popular symbolic representations in Early Byzantine art, and it occurs frequently in jewellery and particularly on lunette earrings in the sixth–seventh centuries (Yeroulanou 1999, nos. 488–508, pp. 186, 281–3; Baldini Lippolis 1999, nos. 2, 4–8, 12–17, 21, pp. 104, 105, with bibliography), as well as one pierced-work necklace clasps of the same period (Yeroulanou 1999, p. 132, fig. 235, nos. 62, 65, 66, pp. 215–16). However, this type of chain with large links, pendant and the manner of securing it with a hook is rare. The only similar example known is the other chain in the Krategion hoard, BM 878 (Vavrisas 1954, p. 327, no. 7, fig. 1; Athens 1964, no. 390, p. 364; Thessaloniki 1997A, no. 228, p. 201; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 225 no. 1, fig. 14).

EUGENIA CHALKIA



## Gold body-chain

Gallo-Roman, late fourth century  
Gold, amethyst, garnet, length of individual chains, 37–8 cm;  
weight 249.5 g.

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. 1992.4.8.1  
PROVENANCE: treasure hoard found at Horse, Suffolk, 1992  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Johns 2003, John forthcoming

The body-chain is the largest item of jewellery in the Hoxne treasure. Found in 1992, the complete hoard consists of gold jewellery, silver tableware (chiefly spoons) and around 15,000 gold and silver coins. The two latest coins were issued in AD 407–08, so the entire hoard must have been buried after that date.

Four flat multiple loop-in-loop gold chains with lion-head terminals are joined to form the upper-body decoration passing over the shoulders and under the arms of the wearer, and crossing at the front and back. The decorative junction at the front, permanently linked to one end of each chain, is a roughly oval gold setting for nine gems. Only five gems survive: a cabochon amethyst in the centre and four almond-shaped garnets alternating with four empty circular cells, which may have contained pearls. At the back is another connection, in the form of an octagonal open-backed mount with foliate decoration, set with a *solidus* of Gratian (AD 367–83), minted at Trier. This clasp is a re-used pendant from an older, probably third-century, jewel. Two of the links at the back can be unhooked, so that the chain harness, which would have fitted closely on the torso of its wearer, could be put on and taken off easily.

Body-chains (often known in the literature as 'breast-chains') had a long history in the Ancient Near East and in the Greco-Roman world, but relatively few examples survive. In the Roman period, they were frequently associated in art with nymphs and with Venus and Cupid, and may well have had symbolic values connected with love and, possibly, marriage.

CATHERINE JOHNS

## 132

## Gold belt-buckle

Constantinople, seventh century  
Gold, length 7.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. 1980.7.8.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Brannish 1982, no. J, p. 303 (D. Buckton)

This gold buckle with a cruciform plate is joined by a hinge to both tongue and loop. The top of the loop is incised with crescent shapes, each with two reserved granules. The tongue is punched on the top with a fret design and under the tip of its tongue with a craftsman's mark. Near the hinge, the plate is chip-carved in an engrailed design in the crescent/granule motif. The rest of the plate is embossed with a Latin cross, the head and arms

scalloped and the foot terminating in a roundel. On the back of the plate are four attachment lugs.

The buckle falls into a small but closely related group, all possibly from a Constantinopolitan workshop. The closest comparable example, on both stylistic and technical grounds, is in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 2005, no. 4F, pp. 7–8, pl. x). Although the outline of the plate differs in many respects, the general shape of the tongue and loop, the construction of the hinge, the use of the fret design on the top of the tongue and, on the loop, of incised crescent-shapes with reserved granules are all exactly reproduced. The Dumbarton Oaks buckle has been dated to the first half of the seventh century on the grounds that it may have been found with two *solidi* of Herakleios (610–41) struck at Constantinople between 613 and 630.

Similar decorative motifs – generally consisting of an arrangement of crescents, triangles and dots and known as 'Punkt-Komma' – can be seen on other sixth- or seventh-century AD buckles from, *inter alia*, Hama in Syria (Baltimore 1947, no. 468, p. 99, pl. LXVI), Mytilene in Greece (Athens 1964, nos 392–3, p. 367), and on diverse belt-fittings from Antioch-on-the-Orontes (Ross 1952, pp. 31–2, fig. 4).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 133

## Gold strap-end

Constantinople, seventh century  
Gold, 3 × 2.4 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. 1980.7.7.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Andrian 2000, no. 2, pp. 71–3, fig. 10

This gold strap-end of hollow-box construction has rounded ends, straight sides and an opening for the strap. The front is embossed and chased in imitation of both granulation and swaged wire, and chased with motifs, including a heart and a crescent with two reserved granules. On the reverse is an embossed trefoil-like plant motif and further geometric ornament.

Belts in the Late Antique period were decorated with numerous fittings, including belt-buckles, tongues and strap-ends: one example from the Mersin treasure in Cilicia, for example, consisted of nineteen individual components (Werner 1974, pl. vii). The above strap-end would have been the terminal for one of the many pendant straps with which such belts were embellished. The popularity of this type, and the ubiquity of the 'Punkt-Komma' decoration employed on it, is attested by numerous finds from outside the borders of the empire: both in high-status Lombardic graves such as at Castel Trosino and Trezzo sull'Adda (Brescia 2000, p. 68, fig. 44, no. 34a, p. 70, fig. 49, no. 39a, pp. 85–6 and 88), as well as in Avar graves of similar status at the

Hungarian sites of Kunágota, Hatvan-Boldogpuszta, Hernád and Medina (Garam 2001, pp. 336–7, pls 83–6). It has been much debated whether these are to be attributed to Constantinopolitan as opposed to provincial workshops, or whether they represent purely local imitations by Lombardic and Avar goldsmiths.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 134

## Crossbow fibula

Constantinople (?), c. 480  
Gold, 11.9 × 5.5 × 4 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1995 (1995.92)  
PROVENANCE: collection Simon Bendel, London, 1964–75; purchase (Michael Ward, Inc., New York, 1995); purchase, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1995  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Brown 1993, New York 1999, no. 36, pp. 30–1 (K. Brown); Veroldoni 1999, no. 175, pp. 52, 53, 92, 100, 195, 233, fig. 67; Dandridge 2000, G. Zaluska

This elaborate gold fibula is the largest of its type to survive. The pierced goldwork decoration stresses the importance of Christianity through the face, headplate, decorated with a tall, thin cross rising from acanthus leaves. As often found on liturgical crosses, the Greek letters alpha and omega extend from the cross arm with the tip transformed into a Chi Rho encircled in a triumphal wreath. Acanthus scrolls fill the sides of the extended rectangular face with the sides of the triangular foot decorated with simpler geometric patterns. Gold crossbow brooches like this were symbols of rank used to fasten the cloaks (chlamys) of Byzantine dignitaries, as seen on the attendants of the Emperor Justinian in the mosaic at San Vitale in Ravenna (fig. 1).

Eight related gold fibulae survive whose find sites extend across the Byzantine Empire, including graves of border peoples given Roman rank in exchange for peace and/or military service (Deppert-Lippitz 2000b, pp. 56–70). The Metropolitan fibula is similar in its triangular foot to a fibula found at Apahida, Romania, in the grave of Omharus, one of these border figures (New York 1999, no. 36, pp. 30–1; Deppert-Lippitz 2000b, p. 57). The size and weight of the Metropolitan fibula suggest that it was for a person of great importance within the empire or on its borders. While such gold fibulae are exceptional, the construction of the Metropolitan fibula has been shown to be similar to decorated fibula in less precious metals and thus not necessarily a work of an imperial workshop (Dandridge 2000, pp. 82–4).

HELEN G. EVANS

## 135

## Bracelet

Eleventh–twelfth century  
Silver, repoussé, chased, traces of gilding, niello, 2.2 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1137  
PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1986, p. 191, no. 201 (L. Bouras); Georgouda 1999, pp. 331–2, no. 125 (A. Ballian)

This cylindrical bracelet is similar to cat. 136, although less wide. The design is compressed and simplified: the rectangular panels have been omitted, the interconnecting roundels have become mere dots and the large almond-shaped motifs are of equal importance to the central roundels.

The main feature of the bracelet is the arabesque-style ornamentation, executed in niello on a silver background and vice versa. Arabesque scrolls and pseudo-Kufic motifs belong to the orientalising repertoire of Byzantine ornamentation and are the two most characteristic features of Islamic art that spread beyond the frontiers of the Islamic world. In Byzantine illuminated manuscripts the various forms of scrolled arabesques were used as decorative designs on furniture, metal objects, articles of everyday use and fabrics such as hems of garments or bedcovers. Sometimes also called vermiculated scrolls, they often appear in architectural decoration and painting, especially in the twelfth century (Pelekandis et al. 1973, pls 125, 139, 298–9, 308, 311; Megaw and Hawkins 1962, p. 336–46, figs 42, 52, 53, 55). At their best they are applied on metalwork, in enamel or niello (New York 1997, no. 300, pp. 460–1, no. 333, p. 497).

Similar scrolls in Islamic art are found in jewellery, silverwork and pottery design (Spink 1986, p. 28, no. 5; Hasson 1987, p. 94, no. 127; Jenkins 1992; see also cat. 136. Some of the few preserved pieces of Islamic silver from Egypt, Iran and Northern Syria demonstrate the same type of scrolled nielloed background (New York 1997, p. 409; Marschak 1986, figs 131–2, 138–41; Edinburgh 2006, no. 10, p. 18, no. 14, p. 21). This type of bracelet shares many of the same features as a bracelet now in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and originally part of the Sayram Su hoard – including the style of scrolling and nielloed design – which was found with Islamic coins datable to between 949 and 1040 (Allan 1986, p. 12, fig. 40).

ANNA BALLIAN

## 136

## Bracelet

Eleventh century  
Silver, repoussé, chased, partial gilding, niello, 3.3 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11457  
PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1986, pp. 190–1, no. 201 (L. Bouras); Georgouda 1999, pp. 331–2, no. 125 (A. Ballian); Theodoraki 2004, p. 413, no. 340 (A. Drandaki); Sydney 2005, pp. 136–7, no. 93 (A. Ballian); Lohsen 2007, p. 191, no. 99 (A. Ballian)

The wide cylindrical bracelet (*perikarpion*) is made up of two sections of equal size, joined by a hinge. Each section is divided into three rectangular panels with a medallion at the centre, framed by

four almond-shaped motifs. Smaller medallions are linked to the larger ones, creating a horizontal axis and balancing the arrangement of the panels. Each medallion is decorated with a fine nielloed design of a cross formed by four scrolled, heart-shaped palmettes.

The type of bracelet with rectangular decorative panels decorated with relief roundels and almonds seems to represent a simplified form of Late Antique bracelets, such as those found on Palmyran sculpture. They are embellished with almond-shaped leaves in imitation of gem-studded originals (Mackay 1949, pp. 176–7, fig. 6a, pls LVII.2, LVIII; Seyrig 1952, p. 233, figs 13–15; Lepage 1971, p. 7).

The use of scrolling design and the cylindrical shape relate this bracelet to a group of bracelets distinguished by their mixed Byzantine-Islamic decoration of real and imaginary animals, including the Iranian mythical *simurgh*. They are preserved in the Kanellopoulos Museum in Athens, the Dumbarton Oaks Collection in Washington DC, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore and the Louvre, Paris (Netzer 1991, no. 166, pp. 164–5; Paris 1992, no. 253, pp. 338–9 [J. Durand]). The Louvre bracelets were part of the Izgiri treasure from Bulgaria, which consisted of plates worked in a similarly mixed Byzantine-Islamic style (Ballian and Drandaki 2003, pp. 47–80). The same features occur on one other intact bracelet (cat. 135) and on two sections of bracelets in the Benaki Museum, Athens, decorated with griffins and pseudo-Arabic inscriptions in angular Kufic script (Athens 1986, nos 199–200, p. 190).

ANNA BALLIAN

## 137

## Bracelets

Sixth–seventh centuries  
Gold, diameter 5.5–6.1 cm; width 0.1–0.55 cm; diameter 5.5–6.05 cm; width 0.1–0.55 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, inv. nos 884, 885  
PROVENANCE: Kratigos, Myslen, Lesos  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vaynsen 1954, p. 327, no. 6, fig. 1; Athens 1964, no. 394, pp. 365–6; Theodoraki 1997a, no. 125, p. 190 (C. Baharinnis); Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 182, no. 8; Theodoraki 2004, no. 317, p. 411 (E. Meramvlinaki); Touratsoglou and Chalkia forthcoming

The bracelets (*psellia*) are virtually identical, with only minor differences in their dimensions. They comprise a solid band of elliptical shape and varying width. Their curvature decreases significantly, mainly on the upper side of the piece of jewellery, to such a degree that it appears almost straight. At the centre of this side, which is also the thickest point of the *psellia*, a rib is formed, while at the centre of the lower side, which is the thinnest point, is an opening to facilitate fitting the bracelet around the wrist.

The bracelets are of the simplest type of this kind of ornament, which is known from Antiquity but was widely spread during the sixth and

seventh centuries (Baldini Lippolis 1999, pp. 176–8, 182). The Kratigos treasure includes four other bracelets that are exactly the same, while similar ones are encountered in other hoards/treasures of the sixth–seventh century, the best-known being the pair no. J 431 in the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, from the Lambousa treasure (Athens 1964, no. 401, p. 368; Pierides 1971, no. 8, p. 58; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 182, nos 6–7a), and the bracelet no. w 100 from the Mersine treasure, in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Grabar 1951, fig. 2.10; Bank 1985, no. 102, p. 288, D; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 182, nos 2–5a). Furthermore, there are bracelets of comparable type, with minor deviations in the form of the bar, in various museums (Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 182; Touratsoglou and Chalkia forthcoming).

EUGENIA CHALKIA

## 138

## Pair of bracelets

Fourth or early fifth century  
Gold with sapphires and emeralds, diameter 8.5–11.6 cm;  
8.7–11.4 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. The Adolph D. and Wilton C. Williams Fund, 69.32.31/2  
PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lepage 1971, p. 15; Richmond 1994, no. 16, pp. 60–71; Veroldoni 1999, no. 206, p. 243

This pair of bracelets is an important example of pierced-work technique (*diatria*) combined with precious stones. Both hoops are of semicircular cross-section, with a movable part as the fastening. On each bracelet four mounted sapphires alternate with four emeralds.

In the zones above and below the stones are ivy scrolls and the central zone between the stones has two circles with stem and central lozenge enclosing a rosette, as well as a lozenge with scrolls around a vine leaf.

The movable part in the central zone is decorated with lyre-guilloche pattern, while small cruciform leaves fill the ends.

The pierced work is exquisite and these bracelets belong to a group of *diatria* jewellery which has been worked with a special tool that traces the design from the outset (Buckton 1983–84) so that it is also visible on the back, as, for example, on the medallion of Constantine the Great, in the British Museum, London (inv. no. MLA 1984, 5-1, 1). These pieces of jewellery are associated too with the common ivy scroll, as well as with the characteristic tendrils sprouting from the stem and coiling backwards.

Bracelets of similar shape and technique, that also use precious stones, exist in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Department of Antiquities, inv. no. 1977.272) and in the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz (inv. no. 0.39321).

Other common elements, such as concentric circles and lozenges, lyre-guilloche pattern, rosettes and vine leaf, are encountered on various



pieces of jewellery of the same period. All these suggest that the pieces were produced in one centre or even in the same workshop and were disseminated widely during the fourth and the early fifth century.

AIMILIA YEROULANOÛ

## 139

### Pair of bracelets

Cyprus (?), sixth century  
Gold, diameter 9 cm

*Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 0135-0136*  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segal 1938, no. 261, pp. 169–71, pl. 57; Deppe 1979, p. 104 fig. 30; Chaniadakis 1971, p. 378, fig. 25; New York 1979, no. 207, pp. 211–12; Deloustan 1980, pp. 13 and 17, fig. 23; Brunsch 1982, no. 1, p. 198; Brown 1984, p. 5, fig. 3; Metzger 1990, p. 5; Dallas 1996, p. 74, pl. 34; Deloustan and Fotopoulou 1992, p. 43, fig. 374; Georgiada 1999, no. 113, pp. 310–11; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 220, p. 243.

The bracelets are formed from a hoop of semicircular cross-section, with repoussé decoration of a repeating stem sprouting from a cornucopia. On the movable disc, the same pattern is executed in pierced work around a stellar rosette. The disc is surrounded by a row of relief granules, a plain frame and granulated wire on its circumference.

The movable disc with hinges for fastening is characteristic of this type of bracelet in the fifth and sixth centuries. The hoop is usually formed from a wide band in repoussé (see the bracelet from Constantinople in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC: Ross 1963, no. 2A, pp. 4–6), pierced work (see the bracelet with repoussé figure of the Virgin on the circular movable part and pierced-work decoration on the hoop, in the British Museum, London: Dalton 1901, no. 279, pp. 45–6) or with elements soldered together to create the impression of pierced-work decoration (see the bracelet from the Cyprus treasure: Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 53, no. 20, fig. 43). In certain cases the hoop is covered by mounted precious stones (see the bracelets from Egypt in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Dennison 1918, nos 28 and 29, pp. 157–9). Contemporary representations show that these bracelets were widely diffused.

The decoration of the bracelets is notable for its technical execution and the rendering of the subject. The designs on the pierced-work surface are clearer than on other examples, and are also enriched with additional repoussé and carved decoration on the disc and the hoop. The stems and the cornucopias thereby acquire a richness very similar to the ones on the cross of Justin II, in the Vatican Museum, dated to 565–78, confirming the dating of the bracelet to the sixth century. The treatment of the decoration is slightly different on each bracelet: on one, perhaps the later, the subjects are less distinct.

AIMILIA YEROULANOÛ

## 140

### Bracelet

Rome (?), fifth century  
Gold, 6.8 × 5.9 × 1.6 cm; strap 15.5 cm

*Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.0160).*  
PROVENANCE: said to be from Tennes, near Assut in Upper Egypt, or from ancient Antioch on the east bank of the Nile, acquired in Cairo by J. Pierpont Morgan (Dennison 1918, pp. 157–16, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1917).

The loop and hoop of this bracelet, one of a pair found in Egypt, are elaborately decorated with pierced goldwork, *diatrita*, a technique related to the *opus interrasile* of the Roman tradition. The geometric precision of the patterning has been argued to date the work to the fifth century (Yeroulanou 1999, pp. 15–26, 154). The tiny lion head terminals on the hinge-pins for the hoop have been identified as fifth century in style and similar to other works of that date from Pécamp in France, Ténès in Algeria and Reggio Emilia in Italy. The dove pattern too has been related to works found in Ténès and Reggio Emilia, as well as other sites, including the Palatine in Rome (Deppert-Lippitz 2000a, pp. 65–6). A small cross at the centre of the loop opposite the elaborate hoop is the only suggestion that the doves might be meant in a Christian context. While many Early Byzantine bracelets open with hinge-pins, this bracelet is unusual in that the pin works by a screw mechanism, similar to ones on the bracelets at Ténès and Reggio Emilia, and identified as a status symbol, indicative of the aspirations of the owner (Brown 1993).

HELEN C. EVANS

## 141

### Bracelet

Probably from Constantinople, ninth or tenth centuries  
Gold and glass, 5.7 × 8.6 × 6.6 cm

*The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, inv. 262.64*  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pelikanidis 1999, Grabar 1964, Athens 1964, no. 462; Waldsch and Lafontaine Desroges 1998, p. 106; Brunsch 1982, p. 190; Thessaloniki 1986, pp. 80–82; Haselhoff 1990, pp. 31–33; New York 1977, pp. 243–4; Thessaloniki 2002, pp. 110–12.

This gold bracelet is one of a pair excavated with a hoard in Thessaloniki. Bracelets were worn on the wrists to hold in place the long, almost floor-length sleeves of fashionable formal garments worn by women in the Middle Byzantine period.

Each bracelet is made from two equally sized, curved trapezoid-shaped plates, linked to one another by slender bars that fit through five small ribbed tubes. The bar in one of these hinges was fixed, while that in the second could be removed in order to undo the bracelet. The plates are bordered at the top and bottom by an overlaid three-strand braid. Each bracelet is covered with twenty panels, which are bordered by granulated bands and decorated with cloisonné enamel. The panels feature representations of, alternately,

a bird pecking at a leaf, palmettes and rosettes, rendered in slightly differing colours in each panel. This variation is achieved with the use of white, blue, ultramarine and red glass – and probably also crimson, which now appears black – in different areas in each one.

Given the valuable nature of these pieces of gold jewellery, their subtlety of design and their exquisite craftsmanship, the bracelet is likely to have belonged to a member of the highest social strata of Byzantium.

ANASTASSIOS C. ANTONARAS

## 142

### Bracelet

Constantinople (?), sixth–seventh century  
Gold, silver, pearls, amethysts, sapphires, glass, quartz and emerald plasma, diameter 8.2 cm

*Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.0790).*  
PROVENANCE: said to be from Tennes, near Assut in Upper Egypt, or from ancient Antioch on the east bank of the Nile, acquired in Cairo by J. Pierpont Morgan (Dennison 1918, pp. 157–16, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1917).

This elaborate bracelet, one of a pair, is decorated with jewels on the exterior of its hoop and loop and elaborate *diatrita*, pierced goldwork, decoration on its inner surface (Yeroulanou 1999, pp. 15–26, 62–4). The pearls and gemstones on the exterior have been associated with similar bracelets worn by the attendants of the Empress Theodora (1055–56) in the mosaic at San Vitale in Ravenna (fig. 30) and argued to support a Constantinopolitan origin for the work (Brown 1979, pp. 57–62; Brown 1993, p. 89 on the basis of this bracelet's sophisticatedly hidden clasp on the loop). The elaborate *diatrita* patterns on the interior are similar to ones found as the exterior decoration of other works. Related patterns exist on a medallion for a necklace in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, which has been argued to have been produced in Syria, possibly Antioch, as a product of a high-quality provincial workshop (Richmond 1994, no. 35, pp. 104–5). Part of a hoard discovered in Egypt, this bracelet represents the wealth and ambition of its owner to be dressed in styles exported from, or produced in imitation of, those worn in the imperial capital.

HELEN C. EVANS

## 143

### Gold bracelet with a bust of the Mother of God

Eastern Mediterranean, c. AD 600  
Gold, depth of hoop 6.7 cm; depth of medallion 4.4 cm

*The Treasures of the British Museum, London, no. 43*  
PROVENANCE: said to have come from Syria, from the Franka Bequest, 1897.

This gold bracelet with an openwork hoop and a clasp in the form of a medallion is decorated

with a repoussé bust of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin, who wears a himation, raises both hands in the orant position. Flanking the bust are four empty settings for gems or glass pastes. The hoop, which is executed in a technique known as *opus interrasile* (literally 'pierced work'), is composed of two tubes of gold sheet containing a design of a central vase, from which emanate two running scrolls containing pairs of swans and peacocks.

This bracelet stands at the end of a long tradition of Late Antique bracelets with openwork hoops: the *opus interrasile*, which is much less tightly organised than on third- and fourth-century jewellery, is typical of that dating to around the year 600. Similar iconic representations of the Virgin are hard to find on Early Byzantine jewellery. Apart from on the now-lost counterpart for this example, formerly in the collections of the Italian collector and goldsmith, Alessandro Castellani, and Count Tyszkiewicz (Froehner 1897, pp. 74–5, no. 108, pl. 17), the Virgin tended to be depicted either in narrative contexts on gold *ankalpa*, drawn either from the Mariological or Christological cycles, or in schematic form on amulets, rings and pendant crosses.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 144

### Gold openwork bracelet

Eastern Mediterranean, fourth century  
Gold, diameter 10 cm

*Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 3010, 509*  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Némethy 1977, pp. 201–3; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 202

The bracelet was found at Tartus, Syria, together with a counterpart, now in St Louis (Yeroulanou 1999, no. 203). Its convex shape was created by combining eight oblong with sixteen trapezoid plaques in *opus interrasile* with different patterns and the blessing inscription EYTYXQC XPΩΔIA BIOY (use it for [your] luck throughout life). The pair bears the words ΨΥXH KAAH YTIENOYCA ΦOPI (beautiful, healthy soul, wear it).

The *opus interrasile* technique was widespread in the Roman and Early Byzantine Empire from the third to seventh centuries. The typical lace-like effect was created by piercing sheet gold. A broad range of floral, geometric and figural motives, as well as inscriptions, appear on gold jewellery, fibulae, belt buckles or even sword ornaments. The same stylistic development is found in other genres of Early Byzantine art, such as on capitals in the Church of St Sophia, Constantinople (sixth century), with their lace-like effect gained by undercutting the marble surface.

The bracelet can be dated to the fourth century because of its production method: it was made by initially piercing holes into the sheet gold and then widening them with a triangular chisel to create different patterns, which is typical for earlier *opus interrasile*.

Over 600 pieces of gold jewellery in *opus interrasile* have survived. They have been thoroughly catalogued by Aimilia Yeroulanou. Most of the 47 preserved *opus interrasile* bracelets (Yeroulanou 1999, cats 197–235) are closed bangles made from a flat or convex sheet of gold. Nine bracelets feature a decorated disc serving as clasp, while two bracelets are formed by interlocking elements. One piece stands out from the rest in that it consists of two panthers holding a plaque. Many bracelets are also adorned with pearls and precious stones such as emeralds and sapphires. While most openwork bracelets have been passed down as single pieces, eighteen form nine pairs, which suggests that bracelets were normally worn as pairs.

ANTJE BOSSLMANN-RUECKHE

## 145

### Pectoral cross

Thirteenth–fourteenth century  
Gold, lapis lazuli, 4 × 0.7 cm

*Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 0153*  
PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segal 1938, p. 174, no. 277; Athens 1986, no. 244, p. 195; (L. Bouras); Athens 1984, no. 80, p. 236 (A. Drandaki); Georgiada 1999, pp. 354–5, no. 239 (A. Ballian); Sydney 2005, no. 97, p. 240 (A. Ballian); Leiden 2007, no. 102, p. 104 (A. Ballian).

The small cross is of the Resurrection type – with two horizontal bars – and hangs from a double suspension loop. Inset on the front, and projecting from it, is a cross of lapis lazuli held in place by a strip of gold. The weight and the thickness of the cross are due to the lapis lazuli, which is deeply set in a protective case.

The pectoral cross is reminiscent of portable reliquaries containing fragments of the True Cross, which were widespread during the Middle Byzantine period. The way in which the lapis lazuli is inlaid refers to the cruciform openings of reliquaries, through which the sacred relic they contained could be seen.

Engraved on the reverse of the cross is an inscription underlining its protective power and mentioning its owner: +OHAON TENOIO KAI ΦΥΛΑΞ QCT(A)Y PE MOY / BAPA <PA> ITONOY(A)Ω CEBACTΩ ΓE MPTIΩ (O my Cross, become a weapon and guardian for Georgios Varangopoulos Sebastos). The title Sebastos, which derives from the Greek translation of the Roman imperial title Augustus, reappeared in Byzantium in the eleventh century, when, in the context of efforts to strengthen the position of the reigning dynasty, it began to be awarded mainly to kinsmen of the Komnenos family as well as to foreign princes. From the late twelfth century, however, the title was demoted and began to be granted to lower-ranking officials and to leaders of the ethnic groups settled in the Byzantine realm. The name Varangopoulos possibly declares the origin of the owner from the Varangians, the Scandinavian people who played an important

role in the military and political history of Byzantium, primarily as mercenaries in the emperor's bodyguard. An Alexios Varangopoulos is recorded as lord of the island of Kos as early as 1258, and another member of the family is mentioned in a document of 1400 as the proprietor of a bath-house opposite the Monastery of the Hodegon in Constantinople.

ANNA BALLIAN

## 146

### Gold ring with *opus interrasile* decoration

Rome, around 300  
Gold, diameter 2 cm

*The Treasures of the British Museum, London, inv. no. 1917.1952.0187*  
PROVENANCE: found in the River Tiber, Rome; Louis Montfaucon Richard Zacharie, Sir Augustus Wellesley Franks; given to the British Museum as part of the Franks Bequest, 1897.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Riedl 1901, p. 143 and pl. 80; Marshall 1948, p. 198, no. 687; and pl. 100; Higgins 1980, p. 184, n. 10 and pl. 64; Biroli Stefanelli 1992, p. 218, no. 272 and fig. 266.

The ring comprises a broad hoop of gold. The central, main element is completely filled with *opus interrasile* (pierced work) decoration of fine, intertwining tendrils, perhaps of acanthus. These form swirls alternating left and right. Both borders of the hoop are formed of plain gold bands, edged with continuous small diagonal incisions.

This technique is first mentioned in the later first century AD by Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, XII, 94), in the context of wreaths of sacred cinnamon set in pierced gold crowns, dedicated by the Emperor Vespasian (69–79). The earliest surviving examples of pierced-work jewellery date to the second century AD and the technique became popular from the early third, especially for bracelets and pendants. In the following centuries the pierced decoration was increasingly detailed, leaving less of the original gold visible (Biroli Stefanelli 1992, pp. 75–6). The most ornate Roman examples date to the fourth century, and often incorporate medallions or coins of emperors such as Constantine I (306–37) and his family (Biroli Stefanelli 1992, pp. 219–20).

Finds of Roman jewellery in this technique are concentrated largely, though not exclusively, in the Western empire (Britain, France, Germany and Italy), suggesting that the technique originated in the West.

PAUL ROBERTS

## 147

### Finger ring with the Annunciation

Sixth or seventh century  
Gold and niello, diameter 1.6 cm

*Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 0189*  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segal 1938, no. 261, p. 169, pl. 50; Hadzidakis 1944, no. 79, p. 201; Dallas 1996, p. 71, fig. 30; Georgiada 1999, no. 173, p. 339.

The wide polygonal hoop of the ring carries an elliptical bezel with representation of the



Annunciation, in niello. Depicted on each facet of the hoop is a saint in bust.

The type of ring is characteristic of a wedding ring, which the Church Fathers permitted the Early Christians to wear, whereas generally they discouraged adornment with many and expensive pieces of jewellery (Clement of Alexandria, *Patrologia Graeca*, 8, line 633). Represented on the bezel of many examples are the bride and groom being crowned by Christ or the Virgin. The facets of the hoop are decorated with scenes from the Life of Christ (see the Palermo ring found at Syracuse: Hadzidakis 1944, no. 81, p. 202; one ring in the British Museum, London: Dalton 1901, no. 129; and one other in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC: Ross 1965, no. 69, pp. 58–9). The scene of the Annunciation on the bezel of the Benaki Museum ring could also be correlated with marriage (a similar ring in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, has a representation of the Ascension on the bezel: see Baltimore 1980, no. 427). The Virgin is shown standing and holding the spindle, with the basket of wool at her feet, while the Archangel stands beside her with outspread wings (the rendering of the scene is similar to the ring in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection: Ross 1965, no. 69, pp. 58–9, pl. XLIV).

It is impossible to identify the figures of saints on the facets of the hoop, as the ring is too small to portray the personal features of each. Nevertheless, the type of ring and the iconography of the subject suggests a dating in the sixth or seventh century and its attribution – along with its counterparts – to Constantinople. This dating is reached mainly from the Palermo ring, which was considered to have belonged to Emperor Constans II (641–68) and, indeed, to have been made especially for his marriage in the Byzantine capital, around 650. The iconographic details add credence to this hypothesis (see Ross 1965, p. 59).

AMILIA YEROULANOU

## 148

Finger ring with monogram and eagle device

Sixth or seventh century  
Gold, diameter 2.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1189  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hadzidakis 1944, no. 65, p. 200; Dallas 1990, p. 73, pl. 56; Georgiada 1999, no. 115, p. 314.

The ring comprises a solid cylindrical hoop with circular bezel engraved with a representation of an eagle with uplifted wings. Above the bird's head, which is turned to the left, is the monogram ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ (of Ioannis). The type of ring and the eagle device combined with monogram are particularly widespread (see Stathatos 1963, no. 227, p. 288, pl. XLV; Ross 1965, no. 70, pp. 60–1). Fourth-century theologians discouraged adornment with jewellery, but allowed

Christians to wear a ring, which could be either a signet ring with the name of the family head or the wedding ring. For the former the use of Christian symbols, such as the fish, anchor or birds, was recommended (Clement of Alexandria, *Patrologia Graeca*, 8, line 633). Over time, the symbols were replaced by monograms, the earliest of which are in the form of a solid rectangle, with the letters combined around the initial, while from the reign of Justinian onwards, monograms of cruciform type prevail (Schlumberger 1884, pp. 83ff.).

The Benaki Museum ring can be considered to be a signet ring, even though the letters of the monogram are not in reverse. It is quite possible that it belonged to a consul, as this view has been expressed for all comparable rings with representations of an eagle, which symbolises the power and authority associated with the title (see Ross 1965, p. 60). The size of the ring and the combination of the eagle with the masculine monogram not only reinforce this hypothesis, but also corroborate the dating of the piece of jewellery to the late sixth or the early seventh century (Schlumberger 1884, pp. 85–7).

AMILIA YEROULANOU

## 149

Finger ring with swivel bezel

Sixth–seventh century  
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2107  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hadzidakis 1944, Grumel 1947, pp. 52–21, New York 1970, no. 305, pp. 326–27; Nourth and Warrs 1981, pp. 53–4; Dallas 1990, p. 75, pl. 58; Georgiada 1999, no. 117, pp. 316–17 (C. Mango).

The ring bezel is octagonal, with each of the eight sides slightly indented. On one face is an engraved representation of a standing archangel holding a cross-topped sceptre in the right hand and an object resembling a sphere in the left. Represented on the other face is St Thekla in prayer, flanked by two animals, possibly lions, and two crosses in the field. On the thickness of the bezel are the ciphers XMF and ζΠΑ, engraved and picked out with niello, which are legible when the face with the archangel device is visible.

This ring has been studied by Manolis Chatzidakis (Hadzidakis 1944) and Cyril Mango (Georgiada 1999, no. 117, pp. 316–17): the best decipherment of the cipher XMF is: Χριστὸν Μαρία γεννά (Mary gives birth to Christ) or Χριστός, Μιχαήλ, Γαβριήλ (Christ, Michael, Gabriel).

More difficult to interpret is the cipher ζΠΑ, which is also found on a gold casket reliquary in the British Museum, London (Dalton 1911, p. 544, fig. 332), on which is also represented a cross on stepped base, with these three letters as finials on the arms. Chatzidakis interprets the letters as a date, but Mango, following Grumel (Grumel 1947, p. 520) thinks the significance was to be apotropaic as the number corresponds to the numerical value

of the inscription: Η βρεφό σωτηρία και αποστοφὴ πάντων τῶν κακῶν (True salvation and aversion of all evils) which frames the cross.

The figure of St Thekla and the ciphers suggest that the ring came from the eastern part of the empire, possibly Syria or Cilicia. The ring is dated to the sixth or seventh century as the stepped base of the cross with the letters first appears on coins of Tiberios II (578–82) and is formed on many coins from the seventh century.

AMILIA YEROULANOU

## 150

Gold and niello marriage-ring

Eastern Mediterranean, sixth or seventh century  
Gold, niello, diameter of hoop 2.3 cm; diameter of bezel 1.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, pt. 47  
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, no. 106, pp. 98–9 (C. Entwistle).

This gold finger-ring has an octagonal hoop and bezel. On the bezel are the standing figures of Christ and the Mother of God placing wedding crowns on the heads of a bridegroom and bride respectively. Beneath the figures is the Greek word for 'Harmony' (ΟΜΟΝΟΙΑ). Both the inscription and the figures are inlaid with niello – a silver sulphide compound commonly employed as a decorative inlay on rings of this type.

The hoop is similarly inlaid with seven scenes from the Christological cycle, beginning from the right-hand side of the bezel: the Annunciation to the Virgin, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Baptism, the Adoration of the Magi, the Crucifixion and, finally, the Angel at the Sepulchre. Most unusually the craftsman has put two of the scenes from the life of Christ in the wrong order: the Adoration of the Magi should of course precede the Baptism.

The tradition of giving rings at the marriage ceremony was an ancient one: in the Roman period it was referred to as the *dextrarum iunctio* (the joining of the right hands). Marriage-rings were worn on the *anularius*, the third finger of the left hand, as it was believed that this contained a sinew which connected directly to the heart.

The octagonal shape of the hoop and bezel was supposed to have had an amuletic function. The sixth-century physician Alexander of Tralles recommended rings of this type as a prophylactic for colic.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 151

Gold ring with monogram

Constantinople (?), thirteenth–fifteenth century  
Gold, diameter 2.65 cm; length of bezel 1.13 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, pt. 47  
PROVENANCE: from the Franka Region, 1897  
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, no. 395 (C. Entwistle).

This gold finger-ring has a hollow fluted hoop and shoulders, and an octagonal bezel. The shoulders are decorated with a band of chevrons, the bezel with a cruciform monogram enclosed by an octagonal border.

A Late Byzantine date for this ring is suggested both by the shape of the hoop and bezel as well as the style of monogram. A close parallel in the Stathatos Collection, Athens (Coche de la Ferté 1957A, pp. 401–1, fig. 30) was part of a group of jewellery, including two bracelets and eleven other rings, said to have been found near Thessaloniki with coins of Isaac II Angelos (1185–95) and Alexios III Angelos (1195–1204). Rings of this form, dating to the last quarter of the fourteenth or first half of the fifteenth century, can also be seen in Western Europe, particularly on French papal rings (Dalton 1912C, no. 883).

Dalton resolved the monogram as 'Manuel' (Dalton 1901, no. 171, p. 27) and attributed the ring to Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425). Although there is no alpha or upsilon among its constituent letters (M. N. H. A.), this suggestion is not entirely implausible given the abbreviated nature of Late Byzantine monograms. More recently a parallel has been drawn between this ring and an example in the Benaki Museum, Athens (cat. 152), which is similarly decorated with a cruciform monogram but also encircled by the inscription: ΤΟΥ ΕΥΜΟΡΦΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ (of the Eumorphopoulou) (New York 2004, no. 15, pp. 45–6). The Eumorphopoulou were an aristocratic family from Mistra, the capital of the Morea in the Peloponnese, and it has been suggested that this ring belonged to the despot of Morea, Manuel Kantakouzenos (1349–80). Both interpretations should be treated with caution. Manuel was after all not that uncommon a name in this period and the ring, if it had an imperial connection, lacks any reference to title or status, which would be expected.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 152

Finger ring

Fourteenth century  
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1189  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1986, no. 215, p. 115; Thessaloniki 1997A, no. 290, p. 235 (A. Drandaki); Thessaloniki 2002, no. 391, p. 442 (A. Drandaki).

This inscribed signet ring is made of a single piece of gold. The hoop widens on the shoulders to end in a circular bezel with a flat surface organised by stippled lines in two concentric circles. At the centre is a cruciform monogram, while in the outer circle is the inscription, engraved in reverse: +ΤΟΥ ΕΥΜΟΡΦΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ (of Eumorphopoulos). The reverse inscription of the name, which is repeated also on the monogram, confirms the ring's use as a seal. A noble family by the name of Eumorphopoulos is known from the area of

Mystras after 1453 (Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια, vol. 11, p. 970).

This type of ring, with a flat circular bezel and wide shoulders, is typical of jewellery during the Palaiologan period. A ring in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC, is of the same shape and has a similar layout on the bezel, with a monogram in the middle, most probably of the Palaiologos family, and inscription in the outer circle (Ross 1965, no. 129, p. 90). The same features are encountered on the gold ring of Paxenos Apelates in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris (Paris 1992, p. 338, no. 252) and of Constantine Palaiologos and Theodora in the Kanellopoulos Museum, Athens (Athens 2001, p. 123, no. 48), while examples of the same type of ring also exist in humbler materials, such as silver and copper alloys (Thessaloniki 2002, p. 442, no. 580; Munich 2004, p. 332, nos 676, 678).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## 153

Earrings

Fourth century  
Gold and glass paste with emeralds and cornelians,  
height 4.2 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1672  
PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, no. 137, pp. 102–3, pl. 33; Dallas 1990, pp. 68–9, fig. 27; Georgiada 1999, no. 107, pp. 296–7.

The hook holds a small quadrilateral mount of gold leaf, inlaid with glass paste and with a soldered palmette frame. From the mount hang a wide pierced-work and carved vine leaf, flanked by filigree stems terminating in tiny ivy leaves; three cornelians set in mounts interlinked by gold wire; three pendent emeralds, of which only the middle one is preserved on each earring.

The palmette frames, common on coin mounts around the third century BC, are sometimes executed in pierced work and sometimes formed as carved bands soldered to the edge of the mounts, as here. Corresponding frames are common too on third- and fourth-century earrings with rosette and mounted stone, from which hang pendants strung on wire or mounted with smaller stones (see earrings in the Stathatos Collection: Stathatos 1963, no. 213, p. 286, pl. XLII [A. Orlandos]). The difference is that on the Benaki Museum earrings the pendent elements are more elaborate and the rendering of the decoration is more naturalistic.

Although the vine leaf as the symbol of Dionysos has led some to date these earrings to Antiquity, a later and Christian date appears more likely. For example, there is a pair of necklace plaques, one of which bears a monogram and the other a vine leaf. The juxtaposition of a X monogram and a vine leaf in a pair of plaques of the same necklace (see Buckton 1983–84, figs 3, 4) indicates perhaps that the vine leaf has also a

Christian symbolism, drawn from the Gospel text 'I am the vine' (see Buckton 1983–84, figs 3, 4). On the basis of the technique of the pierced-work decoration, the plaques are dated to the fourth century. Consequently, taking into consideration the similarity in the treatment of the leaves, the earrings discussed here can be dated confidently to the same period. This view is reinforced by the presence of tiny ivy leaves, which are encountered on many examples, mainly from the fourth century onwards. Given that the decorative subjects of most earrings in later times had Christian symbolism (see Yerooulanou 1999, nos 475–629, pp. 180–8), it is reasonable to assume an analogous content for the vine leaves on the Benaki Museum earrings.

AMILIA YEROULANOU

## 154

Earrings

Antioch, Egypt, fifth century  
Gold with sapphires and pearls, height 9 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1779  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, no. 224, p. 143, pl. 45; Georgiada 1999, no. 111, p. 307.

Each earring comprises an arched wire for suspension, from which hang two snakes forming a figure of eight. A pearl is strung on the upper circle, while a large sapphire on an arched wire hangs from the lower. The shape and the colour of the stones links these earrings with the necklace from Antioch, Egypt (cat. 123). In form they have characteristics in common with two pairs of earrings from the Piazza della Consolazione treasure, now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 1965, no. 1 and G, p. 2). They also display an affinity with the earrings from the Carthage treasure in the British Museum, London (Tait 1986, p. 98, pl. 220). Moreover, analogous pendent elements strung with precious stones are frequently observed in contemporary representations, such as in the portrait of the wife of Consul Stilicho in the consular diptych from Monza or of Empress Theodora in the mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna (fig. 30).

The early dating of the earrings is bolstered by the presence of snakes, which in the Early Byzantine period continued to appear as a nuptial symbol (Segall 1938, p. 163). The important jewellery-producing centres in Antioch and Egypt preserved a common tradition, the Hellenistic elements of which were spread by craftsmen invited from these regions to work in all reaches of the empire, thus contributing to the formation of the international character evident in Early Byzantine jewellery.

AMILIA YEROULANOU



## Earrings

Fifth–sixth century  
Gold with sapphires, pearls and glass, height 0.7 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 4807

PROVENANCE: unknown  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segal 1981, no. 210, p. 154, pl. 45; Dallas 1990, p. 270, fig. 29; Georgiade 1999, no. 112, pp. 308–9

Hanging from the hook of each earring is a triangle of granulated wire, enclosing a mesh of shield-motifs (*pelta*) with one pearl. Attached to the sides of the triangle is wire strung with beads, while from its base hang pendants with circular mounts set with glass paste, no longer preserved in most. Strung on the central rod is a large sapphire.

These earrings combine early features such as the pendants with the characteristic mounts for inlaid stones, with innovative decorative motifs, such as the mesh of *pelta* or the wire strung with stones surrounding the triangle. Specifically, the *pelta*, a common subject in *opus interrasile* in the third century AD, lived on as an ornament in later periods, executed in wire, as for example on a necklace from Cyprus (New York 1979, no. 285, p. 311) or on a necklace pendant from Egypt. The decoration of the latter is enriched with stones and pearls strung on metal rods, corresponding to those on the Benaki Museum earrings (Dennison 1918, no. 11, pl. xxxi). The very wide dissemination of the *pelta* motif in other artistic genres too is attested by its frequent use in architectural decorative patterns, such as on the silver *missorium* of Theodosios in Madrid, or in the mosaics of the Rotunda at Thessaloniki (Grabar 1966a, pls 83 and 351).

Earrings, more than any other kind of jewellery, repeated certain established types, such as the rosette with pendent rods in the third and fourth centuries (see Thessaloniki 1997a, nos 158, 159, 163–8) and the lunate earrings in the sixth and seventh centuries (see cats 157, 158). The Benaki Museum earrings are sophisticated artistic creations, the workmanship of which excellently combines opulence of materials with originality of composition.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

## 156

Gold earring with pearls and enamel

Eastern Mediterranean, tenth or eleventh century  
Gold, with pearls and enamel, 6.6 × 3.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. 1983.242  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Buckton forthcoming

This golden earring exemplifies the quality and expense of the highest-quality jewellery that was available to the Byzantine elite in the tenth to eleventh centuries. Its hollow teardrop shape is finely decorated with three pearls which are attached by narrow gold rods, and a cloisonné

enamel. This has a small floral motif, in blue, green and red, against a white ground. The enamel is attached to the earring by a collet; an empty collet for a second enamel survives on the reverse of the earring. The pendant hangs from a hinged gold ear loop. The technique of the enamel suggests that the earring was probably made in the tenth or eleventh century. It probably came from Byzantium, but significant pieces of gold and enamel jewellery have been found in Kievan Rus' (for example Ross 2005, no. 201).

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 157

## Earrings

Seventh century  
Gold, height 4.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 4810  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segal 1981, no. 213, pp. 155–6; Chatzidakis 1979, p. 196, fig. 7; Dallas 1990, p. 270, fig. 28; Georgiade 1999, no. 110, pp. 323–5 (A. Yerooulano); Yerooulanos 1999, no. 582, p. 394

These lunate pierced-work earrings are decorated at the centre with a stippled band describing a circle, which is divided horizontally into two semicircles. Represented in the upper semicircle are the confronted heads of two birds and part of their wings, while in the lower part is an incised design, analogous to that which is usual in depictions of amphorae and in jewellery, such as on the tiny amphora pendants on two necklaces from the second Cyprus treasure (Brown 1984, pls 12, 14, 15). However, here there is probably a representation of a nest from which the two birds project. This hypothesis is strengthened by the curved leaves of stippled band framing the circle and each enclosing one cinquefoil palmette of the type also encountered frequently on jewellery of this period (Brown 1984, pls 12, 14, 15). The composition is defined by a plain band, soldered to the lower side of which, on the front and back, is incised cord. The edge is decorated with five globules, one of which is missing.

Lunate earrings are usually decorated with the representation of two confronted birds, with a symbolic element between them (Yerooulano 1999, nos 488–558, pp. 281–91). On the Benaki Museum pair there is the tendency towards a more naturalistic rendering of the scene. The nest amidst foliage recalls the corresponding scene on the two discs of the necklace in Mainz, on which birds nesting in trees are represented (Brown 1984, pl. 1, 3).

The relation of the earrings to jewellery from the Mytilene treasure, such as the belt end with a representation of heraldic peacocks, as well as the subtle way in which the different elements are rendered – a feature of later examples – led to the fairly confident conclusion that the Benaki Museum earrings date from the second quarter of the seventh century.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

## 158

## Earrings

Constantinople (?), seventh or eighth century  
Gold, 6.8 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Kanellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no. H272, 46  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Yerooulano 1999, no. 586, p. 295, pl. 180

The flat surface of these lunate earrings is divided in three zones. The two inner ones are covered by highly stylised vine-branches, the grapes of which are rendered by punctured dots. The other zone has punctured and perforated zig-zag patterns. On the outer border nine globules stand out.

The stylisation of the grapes, the preference for punctures instead of granules and the restriction of the perforation to only a small part of the surface fits with a date around 700.

CONSTANTINE SCAMPANTAS

## 159

Tapestry shawl with vase and vine with figures

Egypt, fourth or fifth century  
Linen and wool, 23 × 17.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 717  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Apostolaki 1932, p. 10; Apostolaki 1942–44; Manoussos 1975, p. 18

This tapestry shawl decoration has been woven in the form of a vine sprouting from a vase. The tapestry is mainly dark blue, but a few details are in orange, red and green wool. The vase is a kantharos with a triangular stem, a gadrooned body in yellow, handles with a volute and a scroll motif around the neck base. The plant has two main branches opening out into thinner branches and forming a symmetrical pattern. Four red and black grapes (one missing) hang from the stems, which form five compartments, four bearing an animal and the central one a figure. Beside the main stem are two confronted goats with short horns. Two birds perch among branches. In the middle is a purple *eros* walking to the left but with his head turned back. He has large eyes and curly hair. He carries a small sickle in his raised right hand.

The vase containing a plant is a common motif on Egyptian textiles of the Byzantine period. It is often repeated in a symmetrical arrangement and on a small scale as decoration on tunics. On this fragment the presence of a sickle in the hand of the *eros* indicates that the scene is also related to the vintage. The image and the cult of the vine had existed since Pharaonic times and the syncretism between Osiris, god of the dead and 'master of wine', and Dionysos was well established in the Ptolemaic period. Nevertheless, the models for this type of textile come from the Greco-Roman world. The vine and *erotes* are often represented on floor mosaics. Vintage scenes are also found on third-century pagan and fourth-century Christian sarcophagi. In the pagan world, the vine and wine symbolise the hope of a

new life after death, and this symbolism was also adopted by the Christian world.

ROBERTA CORTIGIANI

## 160

Resist-dyed panel showing the Nativity

Fifth–sixth century  
Dyed linen, 47 × 95.5 cm  
Inscribed: MAPLA

Victoria and Albert Museum, London  
PROVENANCE: gift of Dudley B. Myers, 1900  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Williamson 1966, pp. 48–9

The Mother of God, veiled and haloed, reclines on a seemingly well-padded couch. On the left side of the textile is an angel, hand extended in speech or greeting, and between the two is a cross or star. On the right side, in a damaged area, details of the ox and ass are just visible above a raised crib.

This iconography fits with early Eastern traditions of the Nativity found in several Early Christian apocryphal texts, in which angels attended the birth rather than just appearing to shepherds in the fields. The Virgin's couch and pose is reminiscent of scenes of Roman matrons. The way in which the scene is shown, with its rectangular picture plane and the use of a spiral column at the far left to mark the edge of the scene, is similar to the portrayal of images of sarcophagi, that of Junius Bassus for example.

The textile is Egyptian, found in Akhmim in Upper Egypt. The image was produced by being block-printed with the resist (possibly wax) before being dipped in an indigo dye. It is one of a series of textiles from Akhmim and Antinoe crudely printed, but vigorous and expressive.

LIZ JAMES

## 161

Fragment of a shawl

Egypt, Fayum, ninth–tenth century  
Wool with tapestry bands of wool and linen, 74 × 91.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 15618  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1980, p. 23, no. 69; Paris 1998, inv. 191, pp. 90–7 (A. Ballian); Vienna 1998, no. 122, pp. 102–9 (A. Ballian); Athens 2001, no. 154, p. 189 (A. Ballian)

This large black fragment of a shawl is attributed to Fayum, an important weaving centre of Coptic Christianity situated in Upper Egypt. After the Islamic conquest, Coptic textile output did not dramatically alter, technically or stylistically, although it gradually adapted to the needs and taste of the new ruling Muslim elite.

Characteristic features of the Fayum shawls are the horizontal decorative tapestry bands of varied size woven of polychrome wool and linen and decorated with inscriptions and highly stylised figures (Cornu 1992, pp. 486–99; Cornu and Martiniani-Reber 1993, pp. 138–55). The band above the fringes consists of a typical Fayumi

pseudo-Kufic inscription (probably repeating the combination of alif – lam, for the world of Allah) with vertical shafts terminating in triangles. The highly ornamented Kufic inscription surrounding the top band, above and below in mirror image, is in a similar style. It probably reads: 'and good fortune, and health, and entire victory'. Other common designs are the double volutes motif and the rows of pearly hexagons enclosing quadrupeds or birds in a style reminiscent of the sumptuous silk fabrics. In the second band the medallions show a human figure and a bird with a ribbon floating from his neck in the Sasanian manner. The overall stylisation, and especially that of the human figure, is characteristic of Coptic fabrics from Upper Egypt.

The area of the Fayum is attested by early Muslim writers as specialising in the weaving of woollen fabrics. One of the main towns Bahnasa (the Hellenistic Oxyrhynchos) was particularly famed for its curtains and wall-hangings as well as for the numerous private and public *tiraz* workshops. The evidence of literary sources is confirmed by the survival of several inscribed pieces, some of them bilingual – Arabic and Coptic. One of these, recently deciphered, specifies that the town of Tutun (Tebtynis) housed an important private workshop to which several shawls showing similar Arabic epigraphy can be attributed (Durand and Rettig 2002, pp. 167–70).

ANNA BALLIAN

## 162

## Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, late tenth–twelfth century  
Bone, carved and black organic material, 15.6 × 6.2 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10738  
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Argentioli 1991, fig. 31; Thessaloniki 2002, no. 672c; Ballian 2006, no. 66, p. 73

This female figurine is shaped from a single piece of bone with two attached pieces that form two arms. The basic anatomical details are achieved by simple linear carvings that synoptically define the figure. The nose and ears are carved out in relief. The rest of the details of the face and the body are painted with black material, possibly ink, using designs in the shape of scrolls, dots and heart-shaped and circular motifs. The decoration is confined to the front; the back is plain.

Related figurines in other collections (Paris 2000a, no. 266ab, p. 216) have almost identical decoration and thus form a small group of such statuettes which are more elaborate than most of the so-called 'Coptic dolls' frequently found in Egypt (see cat. 164). All appear to be naked and the markings indicate jewellery or body decorations. Although the function of these small-scale sculptures is not certain, the painted designs suggest a comparison with figural painting of the Fatimid period on paper or lustre pottery. A rare

example of such a drawing in the Israel Museum of Art, Jerusalem, depicts a female musician with many similarities to the figurines, such as the scalloped hair, the long curls, the almond-shaped eyes, the body markings and the decoration on the hands and the feet. The most striking connection, however, is the use of two asymmetrical signs on the cheeks which appear consistently on the bone figurines, as well as on the drawing.

The study of this enigmatic drawing has produced a number of explanations as to its purpose, whether as an illustration of a scientific manuscript, a personification of a calendar month (Hoffman 2000, pp. 40–4), or a loose design of a figure with tattoos (Rice 1958), whose use in the Near East dates from Antiquity and continued into the Islamic era with various meanings, including prophylactic or therapeutic reasons.

MINA MORAITOU

## 163

## Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, tenth–twelfth century  
Bone, carved and black organic material, 11.2 × 2.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10741  
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt  
SELECTED REFERENCES: unpublished

The figurine is shaped out of a single piece of bone with the basic body features formed by simple horizontal incisions and the details painted with a black organic material. It appears to be nude with the breasts and the navel defined by simple circles; the chest bears a heart-shaped motif. The decoration is very schematic and confined to the front; the back is left plain and unrefined. Holes on the sides indicate that the figurine is missing two movable arms.

Details of the face, such as the scalloped hair, the long curls and the almond-shaped eyes, adhere to familiar characteristics of figural representation on Islamic works of art, as on textiles (Ballian 2006, no. 12, p. 47) and lustre ceramics (Ballian 2006, no. 12, p. 29). These features cover a broad chronological period from the ninth century, as in the Abbasid paintings of the city of Samarra (Hertzfeld 1927, pl. 1), to the twelfth century, as in the painted ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, which is executed in the Fatimid style (Grube and Johns 2005, pl. 34, p. 70). These figures, however, are rarely unclothed. This bone figurine is a simplified version of the group of such statuettes that appear to be nude, and their characteristics are defined by elaborate painted as opposed to carved designs (see cat. 162).

MINA MORAITOU



## Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, ninth–eleventh century.  
Bone, carved and black pigment, 16 × 3.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10734.  
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: unpublished.

This female figurine is shaped out of a single piece of bone with the facial features and body details formed by simple geometrical carvings and enhanced by black organic material. The decoration is confined to the front; the back is plain. Holes on the sides of the figurine indicate missing elements such as two movable arms and earrings held by the two holes at the ears, as in other examples in museum collections (Argyriadi 1991, nos 34, 35). The head was covered with a black organic filling to indicate hair or to hold locks of real hair (Paris 2000a, no. 267).

A number of these figurines have been unearthed in Egypt and are dated throughout a broad period according to other finds or architectural evidence (Scanlon 1968, pp. 16–17). A figurine with very similar features was excavated at Fustat and dated to the ninth century (Scanlon and Kubiak 1971, plate xvii/2). The function of these objects has not been thoroughly studied and is therefore uncertain. They share some characteristics which lead to the belief that they were common everyday objects made in large numbers; their frequent occurrence, their simple carving with little artistic value, and the use of bone, a cheaper and more accessible material than ivory. They have usually been associated with the Christian population of Egypt, continuing a pre-Islamic tradition of statuettes which survive in a variety of materials; a number are associated with toys and have been unearthed from children's tombs (Rutschowskaya 1986, p. 86). However, it is likely that certain types were also used in an Islamic context as their decoration is often comparable to works of art associated particularly with the Fatimid period, when figural representation was profuse (see cats 162, 163).

MINA MORAITOU

## 165

## Child's tunic with a hood

Egypt, sixth–eighth century.  
Wool, 65 × 83 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10736.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 2001, p. 316; Tsoumaki 2002.

Perfectly preserved, this warm and soft tunic was a kind of coat worn on top of a linen tunic. It is woven in one piece, the sleeves with the body of the tunic. The hood is woven separately and sewn to the neck opening. After weaving, the two side edges of the garment were sewn together but left open at the armpits.

The technical features indicate a high standard of weaving. It is a perfect example of the way tunics were normally woven during the Byzantine period in Egypt. It is simply decorated with long *clavi* and double sleeve bands. The tapestry pattern is designed in purple wool on light ground. It has wave crest borders and a row of stylised side-viewed birds and fishes. The hood is decorated with a fringe and two roundels with a stylised lion. Hoods still seen belong mostly to child tunics in linen or in wool.

A tunic kept in the Louvre, Paris (Rouen 2002, no. 77, p. 119), is so similar to the Benaki tunic that it is highly likely they were both made in the same workshop.

ROBERTA CORIOFANI

## 166

## Pair of child's sandals

Egypt, fifth–seventh centuries.  
Stamped leather, 12.8 × 5.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10739.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Thessaloniki 2002, p. 112, no. 105 (A. Drandaki); Sydney 2005, p. 104, no. 65 (A. Drandaki).

The leather sandals are decorated with stamped concentric circles and crosses. The soles are well worn, indicating everyday use, in contrast to other examples made of vegetal fibres and with shoddier workmanship, perhaps made for funerary purposes. Numerous items of footwear have been found in graves in Egypt, where the dry climate favoured the preservation of organic materials such as textiles, wood and leather. Several pairs of leather sandals of adults have been found in Antioch and Fayum (London 1997, nos 327–9; Paris 2000a, no. 129 [F. Calament-Demerger]; Bowman 1986, p. 115, fig. 68; Russo 2004, pp. 188–97, pls vi–xi). However, this type of sandal was not exclusive to Egypt (Driel-Murray 2001). An example of similar craftsmanship, dated from the fifth to the seventh centuries, has been unearthed during recent excavations in Yeni Capi (Istanbul 2007, pp. 223, 278, fig. 12, no. 141).

The stamped motifs on the sandals seem to have been commonly used to decorate footwear (Driel-Murray 2001). Comparable motifs are repeated on the sole of a bronze lamp which realistically reproduces a left sandalled foot, also in the Benaki Museum (Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, p. 184, fig. 313). In general, concentric circles were a popular and widespread motif on all manner of works in Late Antiquity. They occur on jewellery, combs, bone carvings and metal vessels, and their popularity is perhaps linked with an apotropaic function (Urbana-Champaign 1989, pp. 5–7). The decoration of footwear with protective motifs was sometimes reinforced by inscriptions wishing the owner good health (Russo 2004, pp. 194–7, pl. xi; Istanbul 2007, p. 277, no. 139).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## 167

## Comb with personifications of Rome and Constantinople

Alexandria (?), second half of the sixth century.  
Ivory, 16.4 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10741.  
PROVENANCE: Egypt, purchased from the antiquities dealer Daguerre in Paris, in October 1925.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 2001, pp. 103–4 (A. Drandaki); Volbach 1976, no. 88b, p. 161, pl. 34; Brunsch 1978, nos 15–17, p. 102; J. Rouen, 2002, pp. 10–11, pl. 15; Brunsch 1978, pp. 102–3, fig. 10; J. Rouen, 2002, pp. 102–3, fig. 10; J. Rouen, 2002, pp. 102–3, fig. 10; J. Rouen, 2002, pp. 102–3, fig. 10; J. Rouen, 2002, pp. 102–3, fig. 10.

This rectangular ivory comb is decorated with low-relief and engraved decoration on both sides. The central core is bordered by sets of teeth, thick and spaced at one end and fine and dense at the other. The personifications of Rome and of Constantinople, seated under ciboria, occupy each side of the core; Rome is rendered as a helmeted Amazon holding a spear and a globe, and Constantinople has a turreted crown on her head and holds a torch and a cornucopia. Both thrones have a tall back, a cushion on the seat and a footstool.

Though made of ivory, the comb displays the typical features of wooden compact combs from Coptic Egypt (see Cailliet 1985, no. 51, pp. 112–13 and Wulff 1909, no. 288, p. 94, pls ix–x). The portrayal of the goddess Roma and the Tyche of Constantinople make the comb unique of its type. Although the iconographic features of the two deities derive from the late fourth or early fifth century, like the silver statuettes of the Esquiline treasure (Rome 2000a, no. 114, pp. 491–3), certain details point to a date in the later part of the sixth century: the ciboria are similar to those of a comb in the Coptic Museum, Cairo, and a pyxis in the British Museum, London (Volbach 1976, nos 204 and 167 respectively). Moreover, the technical and stylistic affinities with a lid of a bone pyxis found on the floor of a house at Alexandria, dated to the later sixth and the first half of the seventh century (Rodziewicz 1984, pp. 243–5, fig. 169; Rodziewicz 1998, p. 143, fig. 6), suggest that the comb is a product of the ivory and bone workshops of the city (Varalis 2002). This artefact of daily use, whose ornamentation is inspired by imperial insignia, may have had a special symbolism in its use as a marriage gift or a burial offering for a distinguished member of Alexandrian society.

IOANNIS D. VARALIS

## 168

## Comb with marine deities

Alexandria (?), sixth century.  
Ivory, 14.5 × 8.25 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10741.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Volbach 1976, no. 88c, p. 161, pl. 43; Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, p. 177, fig. 300.

This rectangular ivory comb is decorated in low-relief and engraved decoration on both sides. The central core is bordered by sets of teeth, thick and spaced at one end and fine and dense at the other.

A pair of nude marine deities is represented on either side: on the front, a half-reclining Nereid tries to swim away from a bearded Triton carrying a torch; on the rear, a young Triton holds the thigh of a Nereid who spreads her arms in order to balance on his lap. The nude Nereids have only a scarf waving above their heads. The Tritons have athletic human chests and trifold fish tails. The waves in the sea are undulating engraved lines.

Nereids, the daughters of Nereus and Doris, are carried on the surface of the sea by sea-monsters and Tritons (Plato, *Kritias*, 116c; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2, 11–14; their role as saviours of navigators and shipwreckers is well known (Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, 1470–71; Euripides, *Helen*, 1384–87; see Icard-Gianolio and Szabados 1992). Marine deities, represented in syncretistic and iconographically eclectic ways, are widespread in metal objects of everyday life in aristocratic milieux, such as the silver Projecta Casket in the British Museum, London (cat. 12), a silver plate in the Benaki Museum, Athens (Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, pp. 180–1, figs 307, 309) and a bronze tripod in the Louvre, Paris (Baratte 1976). Nereids and Tritons are popular in bone and ivory carvers' workshops in Egypt during Greco-Roman times and Late Antiquity (Marangou 1976, pp. 42–3, 81–2). The Benaki comb displays the typical features of compact combs made of wood and ivory (see cat. 167 and Volbach 1976, no. 88a), and its imagery finds affinities with a bone plaque in the Archaeological Museum, Split (Marangou 1976, pl. 47b), and several bone plaquettes inlaid into wooden caskets (Marangou 1976, p. 44 and nos 173–5, pp. 81, 118, pl. 51; see also Elderkin 1926). This comb may have had a special symbolism as a marriage gift or a burial offering for a distinguished lady in Alexandrian society.

IOANNIS D. VARALIS

## 169

## Small amphora

Egypt, fifth century.  
Copper alloy cast in parts, with incised and punched decoration, height 22.4 cm; side of base 8.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10742.  
PROVENANCE: Egypt.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Thessaloniki 2002, pp. 469–70, no. 642 (A. Drandaki); Sydney 2005, p. 104, no. 66 (A. Drandaki).

This small amphora with a pointed base is set in a tripod stand decorated with punched concentric circles and relief animal busts. The handles are in the form of felines, while on the lid is an eagle bearing a cross on its head and standing on a highly schematic bull's head. The neck of the amphora is decorated with herringbone pattern and the belly with incised vine branch and a band of geometric motifs, while the pointed base forms a multilobe calyx.

One other example with the same decoration and an identical finial is in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Paris 2000a, no. 263 [O. V. Osharina]), while similar vessels have been identified in the royal tombs of Nubia and the collections of the former Kaiser Friedrich Museum (now the Bode Museum) in Berlin, the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, and the Louvre, Paris (Wulff 1909, no. 1033; Hayes 1984, no. 195; Torök 1988, pp. 107, 152–3, pls 56, 67, 129, 26; Bénazeth 1992, nos E 11799, E 14210, E 11698, pp. 61–3).

The abundance of comparable examples, all of Egyptian provenance, documents that this type of vessel was very popular in the period. They were most probably used for perfumes and belong to a long tradition of similar miniature vessels with the same purpose. Ancient examples are known too, made of silver as well as of humbler materials, such as clay, while amphorae of glass and wood are preserved from Roman and Late Roman times (Strong 1966, p. 103; Von Bothmer 1984, no. 107; Rutschowskaya 1986, pp. 37–39, nos 39–43; Stern 1995, nos 65–8; Stern 2001, nos 98–101; Lisbon 2007, p. 107, no. 50 [A. Ziva]). The decorative elements of the eagle with cross, the felines, the vine branch and the concentric circles are motifs that appear constantly on diverse Roman objects, while they are repeated unchanged on numerous products of Egyptian copper-work of the Byzantine period.

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

5  
At Church

## 170

Chandelier (*choros*)

Thirteenth–fourteenth century.  
Cast copper alloy, diameter 350 cm; height (without hangings) c. 465 cm

Archäologisches Staatseisenmuseum, Munich.  
PROVENANCE: unknown.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Munich 1978, no. 94, pp. 37–100 (G. M. Reineke); Paderborn 2001, p. 56, fig. 7; New York 2004, no. 60, p. 125 (A. Ballian).

The term *choros* is used in the sources to describe the circular space below the dome and by extension the circular lighting devices of Byzantine churches which hang from the cornice of the dome (Bouras 1982a, pp. 480–1). The suspension chains are made from metal straps, linked together by discs, and terminate in a cruciform arrangement of four discs, to which are attached the twelve horizontal openwork strips. They are decorated with strikingly stylised fabulous beasts with their front leg raised: two sphinxes, face to face, flank a double-headed eagle and a quadruped, of which the head and part of the body are visible. Attached to the upper part of the strips are four or six pricklet candle-holders,

placed symmetrically on either side of a foliate cross. From the lower part hang successively an openwork chain, a cross whose horizontal arms terminate in small hands holding candlesticks and the polycandela. The various sections are held together by single or double dragon-headed hooks.

The stylised zoomorphic patterns recall those of a polycandela in the Metsovo Museum, Greece, and a censer in the British Museum, London, both of which display affiliations with the animals of thirteenth-century Islamic art (Metsovo 2000, pp. 90–3, no. 153; London 1994, p. 201, no. 217; Ballian 2004, p. 124). Further examples of *choroi*, intact or fragmentary, can be found in churches in Serbia; dated examples are no earlier than the second half of the fourteenth century (Todorović 1978, pp. 28–36). The Dečani *choros* (largely restored in 1997), which is still in its original location, has horizontal openwork strips with stylised fabulous beasts wedged with foliate ornament, as found in later, Ottoman-ornamented examples on Mount Athos (Subotić 1998, pp. 79, 238, pls 79, 101; Thessaloniki 1997c, pp. 372–3, no. 9.67 [A. Ballian]). The summary detail and rough workmanship of the Munich *choros* shows it to be a standardised product, unlike those in the Serbian churches, at least two of which, the Dečani and Markov, were commissioned by royal patronage.

ANNA BALLIAN

## 171

## Copper-alloy polycandela

Eastern Mediterranean, c. 550–650.  
Copper-alloy, length of suspension unit 87 cm; diameter of disk 28 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. 1994.0610.11.  
PROVENANCE: probably Syria; from the Marcopoli Collection.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, no. 118 (C. Eavvile).

This copper-alloy polycandela is in the form of a pierced disk with a central openwork cross surrounded by nine circular perforations which would have held glass lamps. Three chains attach the disk to a smaller openwork one with trefoil finials and a central cruciform monogram (resolving as ANACTACIOY or IOYCTINIANOY; Anastasios or Ioustinianos). A further suspension unit in the form of a chain of twisted S-shaped links which terminates in a hook is attached to the upper part of the central disk.

Polycandela were multiple holders for glass oil-lamps. Most surviving examples are made of copper-alloy, but, as the *Libos Pontificalis* mentions, precious metals such as gold and silver were also employed in their manufacture; silver examples are known from the seventh-century treasures of Lampasac and Sion, respectively in the British Museum, London, and the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Dalton 1901, no. 393; Boyd 1992, pp. 24–7, pls 825.1–835.1).







The frame is decorated by scenes in smaller scale, from the story of Jonah, while on the two vertical sides of the tray is a fish motif in larger scale and more realistically rendered.

Represented on this tray are important Christian scenes. The two leading Apostles on either side of the Cross expresses the union of the heavenly and the earthly Church, while the allegorical story of Jonah symbolises the Fall of Man and Salvation. Christ is symbolised by the fish ΙΧΘΥΣ, fish, being an acrostic for 'Jesus Christ Son of God the Saviour'.

Trays of this type were made in the area of Carthage from 350 to 450, but few survive and so perhaps they were rare. Their shape, which copies that of silver trays, their relief decoration and its symbolic character suggest that these were not simply utilitarian objects but used in church worship.

NATALIA FOULOU-PAPADIMITRIOU

179

Gilt-copper plaque with St Theodore

Byzantium (Constantinople?), mid-eleventh century  
Gilt copper, 12.5 × 6.7 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 194, no. 75, 3  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Italian 1901, no. 524; London 1994, no. 161; C. E. Vassiliou

St Theodore was one of the most popular warrior saints in Byzantium. On this cast copper plaque he appears in military dress, holding a spear and shield, his sword hanging from a strap across his back. The armour of his cuirass has been carefully carved, and he wears a sash around his chest and a cloak to denote his officer status. His sainthood is indicated both by his halo and by the small dais on which he stands. The small scale of this plaque suggests that it was a personal object. Although relatively few such objects are known, it is likely that they were made in large numbers. Other comparable examples are known with images of other saints, such as a plaque showing St George in the Kanellopoulos Museum, Athens (Brussels 1982, no. Br.28).

The broken projection at the base of the plaque may have allowed it to be set up on a stand or carried in procession. It was probably either offered to a church as an ex-voto on behalf of its owner, who was presumably particularly devoted to this saint, or carried around to invoke the saint's protection for the wearer at all times. Comparisons with other small-scale carvings suggest that this example was probably made in the eleventh century.

ANTONY EASTMOND

180

Textile hanging with St Makarios and woman in prayer

Egypt, fourth or fifth century  
Linen and wool, 105 × 86 cm

British Museum, Athens, no. 7145  
PROVENANCE: purchased from Nathan Katz, 1912  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Spink 1912, p. 10; D. P. Thompson 1912, p. 10; fig. 10; Marquardt 1917, p. 13; Delavante and Fouquet 1927, no. 131, pp. 196, 197; Thiersch 1931, no. 210, pp. 275, 279

The two selvages and the warp fringe on the bottom side are preserved, indicating that the present dimensions are original. This piece belongs to a group of looped hangings but it is the only piece preserved in its original dimensions and is much smaller than the other known pieces which generally have three or four registers. The looped decoration almost completely fills the weaving; beneath an aedicule are two figures, an inscription and plant motifs.

The two standing figures are viewed front on but with feet seen from the side. The figure on the right, a woman, appears slightly (deceptively) shorter. Their hands are raised in prayer (as orants). The facial details of the man are graphically depicted. His head sits on a thick neck which is the width of his shoulders. The figure wears a red *tunica* with long sleeves and long green *clavi*. A blue mantle with H-shaped decorations covers his left shoulder and falls on the front and back of the man's body. The weaver probably intended the mantle to follow the Classical Roman manner. The woman's facial details are similar to those of the man. She too wears a *tunica* but slightly longer, with richer *clavi* in a green and yellow chequered pattern. A (faded) purple veil covers her head, loops over her chest, and falls behind her to her feet. The bottom of the purple mantle has two rosettes. The red zigzag lines next to the head and feet represent the fringes of the veil.

According to Anna Apostolaki (1953), the Coptic inscription can be read as an invocation to SS. Kyriakos and Makarios. However, the reading of Maximilien Durant seems preferable, as the figures are a man and a woman and not two men: 'Hethyme (the daughter of) Kyriakos (and) Apa Makare'.

This hanging follows a long Egyptian tradition: the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Billou dating from the Roman period contain exactly the same depiction of a deceased person in a praying position under an *aedicula* (Hooper 1961). Here the pagan symbols of those stelae have been replaced by a Christian invocation. This arrangement is also common on Christian funerary stelae (Paris 2000a, nos 101, 102, 104, 105).

ROBERTA CORTOPASSI

181

Reliquary sarcophagus

Byzantium, fifth–seventh century  
Marble agglomerate, 27 × 51 × 25.5 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. 40.764  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Marinova-Reber 1998

This reliquary sarcophagus consists of a trough in light marble, lightly veined in red, with a sliding lid. It was designed to contain a silver reliquary box of welded sheet silver (inv. no. 40.7965), also with a flat lid, which is too fragile to be exhibited.

The sarcophagus differs from the usual pattern only in its much smaller size; its function was to hold not a body, but a relic. In order that the silver reliquary could be placed inside it, it has a sliding lid – an unusual feature – instead of the more normal pitched lid with acroteria on top or a flat lid that can be fitted on top.

The sarcophagus can be connected with four other examples: one in the National Museum, Varna (inv. no. 522; Buschhausen 1971, pp. 291–2, no. C 26); one that was discovered beneath the altar in the small church dedicated to SS. Nazarius and Celsus in Garbagnate (Buschhausen 1971, p. 285, no. C 15); one from Ain-Berich in Algeria (Buschhausen 1971, pp. 318–19, no. C 72); and one from the sanctuary in the basilica in Odois Trius Septembriou, Thessaloniki (Makropoulou 1983, pp. 25–46, pls 6 and 7). Thus, although they are unusual, sarcophagi with sliding lids have been found over a wide geographical area.

The sarcophagus and reliquary are decorated with great restraint: large crosses are somewhat clumsily carved on the trough and lid of the sarcophagus. Another cross is embossed on the lid of the reliquary, which also bears an engraved inscription in irregular Greek capital letters, 'ΑΙΨΑΝΑ [for ΔΕΙΨΑΝΑ] ΑΓΙΩΝ ΑΠΟΚΤΟΛΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΩΝ', (the remains of the holy apostles and martyrs).

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

182

Reliquary crucifix

Constantinople, first half of the tenth century,  
Monastery of St Michael, Damokrancia (now Güzelce)  
Partially gilded silver crucifix holder,  
36.4 × 23.7 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. 40.761  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Busk 1910; Bouras 1910; Bouvier 1910; Cheynet 1910; Dujic 1910a, Dujic 1910b

This reliquary crucifix used to contain a bronze crucifix whose arms terminated in two small silver balls. The bronze cross may be older; it fits into the reliquary crucifix with some difficulty. Although the reliquary crucifix is beautifully executed in its own right, its primary interest lies in the inscription on both the back and the front, which has been the subject of numerous studies.

The text has been transcribed in two ways.

The first, by Bouras, reads: 'This priceless labour, the fruit of great devotion, was created by Leo, commander in chief of the Macedonians, patrician and *domestikos* of the Western Empire, who aspires after St Michael, patron of the armies, the army of Chonae, which has already reappeared, so that he may hereafter be given the new name of Damocrante.' The alternative reading is by Bouvier: 'Out of devotion to the divine Michael, chief of the celestial armies, who appeared at Chonae wearing the features of a young man, this excellent piece born of holy ardour, Leo had it made, first magistrate of the Macedonians, patrician and *domestikos* of the Western Empire, also known as the Damocrante.'

The question of Leo's identity and the exact period at which he lived is therefore still open to question despite the studies made of the crucifix. The donor mentioned at the beginning of the inscription is difficult to identify. His first name, Leo, is known, as is his military position as commander, *domestikos ton scholon*, of the Western Empire, which undoubtedly explains his devotion to the Archangel Michael.

According to Bouras, Leo might be Leo Phokas, who was appointed *Domestikos* of the Occident after 959, and remained in post until 963, the date at which he became a *kouropalates*. Cheynet also suggests convincingly that he could be Leo Tornikios, who rose up against the Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55). This Leo may have commissioned the crucifix before 1046, the year in which he was posted to the Iberian peninsula.

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

183

Epistyle from the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou

Made on site, at Skripou, 873/74  
Marble, 18.5 × 33.3 × 33.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 29th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 8314  
PROVENANCE: Monastery of Skripou, Orchomenos, Boeotia  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Strzykowski 1904, pp. 1–10; Sotiriou 1911, pp. 147–8, pl. 102, 1 and 5; Gruber 1915, pp. 27–3, pl. 102, 1 (below) and 4–6; Mergu 1916, pl. 12, c, b, pl. 12, c; Papalexandrou 1928

This sculpture is one of the first sanctuary screens (templon) made after the end of iconoclasm in 843, and it belongs to the surviving large church at Skripou founded by an imperial official, the protospatharios Leo in 873/74. The exterior and interior of the church are profusely decorated with ornamental string-courses, cornices and other features, and with inscriptions recording the foundation and the dedication to the Virgin, St Peter and St Paul. From the sixth century onwards Byzantine churches were equipped with a higher sanctuary barrier than before, known as a templon. Skripou has a central templon in front of the sanctuary and additional ones for each of the two side chapels. All three had collapsed by

the late nineteenth century, but most of the broken pieces have been found and stored today.

This epistyle (now broken into two) was originally fixed at the opening to the north chapel, dedicated to the Apostle Paul (Megaw 1966). It was secured at each end in the walls and supported by two colonnettes on each side of the central opening into the chapel. At the centre of the front face are three decorated crosses, between a sequence of lyre-shaped acanthus with small crosses. The decoration is identical to that on the cornices of the church, indicating clearly that the templon was an organic part of the monument. The back of the epistyle facing the altar has a simple spiralling stem. The underside is decorated at the centre by a cross, surrounded by vine stems and two peacocks. Two plain surfaces indicate the position of the colonnettes. The rest of the beam has interlinked roundels enclosing animals with anthropomorphic heads, alternating with ibexes. This decoration is designed to be seen the correct way up by the priest inside the sanctuary.

The relief style of the sculpture matches an epistyle found in the Church of St Gregory in Thebes, no doubt by the same workshop, probably based at Thebes. The relief sculpture has much in common with the slightly later Church of Constantine Lips at Constantinople, indicating the wide dissemination of such carving around the empire.

EVANGELIA DAFI

184

Closure panel with two peacocks

Thebes, twelfth century  
Marble, 57 × 60 × 9.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 29th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 8314  
PROVENANCE: Thebes  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Orlandos 1939, 40, pp. 138–9; Hecron 2003, p. 70, fig. 56

This almost intact panel of white marble has suffered some minor losses in the lower part. Represented in profile are a symmetrical pair of preening peacocks with fanned tails, on either side of a plant sprouting from a tubular vessel decorated with astragal (bead-and-reel) pattern. Dominating the centre is a flower, in which nestles a bird – possibly a partridge – turning its head to the left. Two symmetrically developed and opposed rinceaux terminating in half-leaves, a common motif in Middle Byzantine sculpture (Sklavou-Mavroicidi 1999, nos 239, 244, 245), sprout from the central stem and fill the background. In contrast to the schematic rendering of the plant, the peacocks are portrayed with a certain realism. The upper parts of their bodies are executed with circles with a central hole, the lower parts with parallel or vertical, deep incisions, and the tails with a combination of circles and incisions.

The theme of animals – real or imaginary – or birds flanking a plant that symbolises the Tree of Life is encountered frequently in Byzantine sculpture (Sklavou-Mavroicidi 1999, nos 151, 156, 157). However, the rare detail of the little bird in the foliage endows this particular composition with a lively originality.

The distinctive carving technique is characteristic of works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Sklavou-Mavroicidi 1999, nos 250, 251, 252, 254, 255, 256, 257), and the decorative subject of spiralling stems are elements that support a twelfth-century date.

This panel was found near the modern Church of St John Kaloktenes (c. 1900) (Orlandos 1939–40, p. 138); he was bishop of Thebes in the late twelfth century (Delvenakiotou 1970; Savvides 2000, p. 381). The size of the panel indicates that it was part of a little templon screen in a small Byzantine church, whose identity eludes us.

ANDROMACHE KATSELIKI

185

Double-sided closure panel

Thebes, ninth century  
Marble, 88.5 × 105.8 × 10.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 29th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 8314  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou 1911, pp. 23–5, fig. 44; Sotiriou 1911, pp. 150–1, n. 1; Gruber 1915, pp. 27–6, pl. 102, 5; Mergu 1916, p. 10, n. 14; Papalexandrou 1928, pp. 201, 202, fig. 57; Hecron 2003, fig. 54, 10c; Kallitroni 2001

This closure panel reuses an ancient plaque, on the upper surface of which can be seen the beginning of an ancient inscription, possibly of an honorific decree: ΑΡΕΤΗ ΕΝΕΚΕΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΛΟΚΑΤΑΘΙΛΑΘΕΙ(ΟΙ)C... On both faces the subject is developed within a rectangular frame of rinceaux with ivy leaves. Represented on one face are three trees: the central tree, with foliage of ivy leaves and trefoils, grows from a conical base where two birds sip water. The space between the birds and the tree is filled with two rosettes. The smaller trees have leaves and fruit; in each of the two lower corners is a bird. At the centre of the second face are two peacocks facing each other, flanking a lyre-shaped tree. In the field is a rinceau terminating in trefoils and bunches of grapes, while below the peacocks are two small trees with ivy leaves.

The closure slab is the product of a local marble-carving workshop that flourished in the second half of the ninth century in Thebes, at the time the administrative centre of the whole region. This workshop is documented by the architectural sculptures of two important ecclesiastical monuments in Boeotia: the ruined Church of St Gregory at Thebes (872–73) and the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou (873–74; cat. 183); sculptures found elsewhere, such as Euboea, Athens, Corinth and Volos, are also attributed to it (Grabar 1963, pp. 95–9; Papalexandrou 1998, pp. 220–33). Similarities in technique, subjects and



style leave no doubt that this panel should be ascribed to this workshop, even though there is no indication of its provenance.

The scenes in low relief are distinguished by symmetry, schematisation and a two-dimensional concept of composition. There is an obvious attempt to fill the entire surface with motifs. Characteristic of the decorative subjects (Tree of Life, peacocks) is their eschatological symbolism, as they are linked with eternal life and paradise (Underwood 1950, pp. 88, 99–101; Bouras 1982b; Maguire 1987, p. 39).

NIKOS D. KONTOGIANNIS AND AIKATERINA TSAKA

## 186

### Double-sided closure panel

Thebes (?), 872/73  
Marble, 97.5 × 73.8 × 9.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 27th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 546.  
PROVENANCE: Church of St Gregory the Theologian, Thebes.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou 1924; Grabar 1963, pp. 95–96, pl. XLIII.1–4; Koilakou 1998, pp. 98–101, drawings 2–3, pl. 50.0, B, with earlier bibliography; Papalexandrou 1998, pp. 220–23; Heronimus 2005, p. 67, figs 47, 48; Koilakou 2008.

This closure panel from a templon screen is decorated on both faces. On one face, within a rectangular frame, are two peacocks facing each other pecking the branch of a tree standing between them. In the lower part is a third peacock, biting a snake. A smaller bird fills the space between them. The panel is surrounded by a double frame of degenerated astragal pattern with lozenges and a spiralling stem that forms circles in which are inscribed rosettes. The central subject on the other face is a Greek cross with flaring ends to the arms. From each arm sprout stems that join together and split into smaller ones, terminating in trefoils or ivy-leaf-shaped buds, forming a mesh around the cross. The composition is framed by a zone of linked palm-tree motifs.

The thematic repertoire is inspired primarily by Early Byzantine models, such as the two confronted peacocks flanking a tree and the cross. Here the compositions are enriched by a multitude of details, in an endeavour to cover every part of the available space. The birds and plants in low relief are transformed into flat and conventional decorative motifs. A disposition for the ornamental is apparent in the treatment of the peacocks' plumage, which is indicated by incised lines and circles, as well as in the diverse rosettes.

According to the donor inscription, the Church of St Gregory was founded by the imperial *kandidatos Basileios* in 772 (Sotiriou 1924; Koilakou 1998; Koilakou 2008). The sculpted decoration of this church, like that of Skripou, was probably the work of a workshop based at Thebes (Grabar 1963, pp. 95–96, pl. XLIII.1–4; Papalexandrou 1998, pp. 220–23). The craftsmanship and the shape of the peacocks'

bodies on this panel are similar to ninth-century sculptures from Constantinople, while the composition, with a central panel enclosing several birds and surrounded by a double frame, recalls Byzantine ivory caskets (Grabar 1963, pp. 95–96, pl. XLIV.1).

MARIA SKORDARA

## 187

### Silver chalice

Syria, Early Byzantine, sixth century  
Silver with niello and gilding, 18 × 26.6 × 16 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Edward J. and Mary S. Holmes Fund, 1971.653.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dodd 1973, pp. 15, 25, fig. 7; no. 9, note 32; Boston 1979, p. 64, no. 27; Boston 1977, pp. 191–4, no. 232; New York 1979, p. 60ff, no. 245; Baltimore 1986, pp. 248–7, no. 73; Goussios, Leclerc and Konstantin 2003, p. 51.

This elegant silver chalice, used to hold the wine of the Eucharist, served as part of a liturgical set for an Early Byzantine church. The technique and form – partially gilded silver hammered into a broad cup attached with a knob to a flared foot – is very close to sixth-century chalices found in Syria. Indeed, the chalice is said to have been found in Syria (it passed through collections in Lebanon and Switzerland); Fuad Alouf Bey, the Lebanese collector who once owned it, indicated (Dodd 1973, p. 25) that the Boston chalice was found with a silver paten with stamps from the reign of Anastasios (AD 498–518), but this information has never been confirmed (Baltimore 1986, p. 246).

Each side of this cup is decorated with a large engraved and gilded Christogram (a combination of chi and rho, the first two letters of the name of Christ in Greek); the letters alpha and omega (the first and last in the Greek alphabet) that hang from the chi refer to Christ as the beginning and the end of all things (Book of Revelation I, 8). Around the rim of the cup is a Greek inscription inlaid with niello (a dark metallic substance): 'Having vowed, Sara offered [this cup] to the First Martyr [Stephen].'

The Boston chalice, together with many similarly styled Early Byzantine liturgical objects found in north-western Syria, attest to the considerable prosperity of the so-called 'dead cities', an area characterised by fertile plains, agricultural bounty and at least 700 documented settlements to date. The stability of Byzantine rule from the fourth to the seventh centuries in this region allowed the pious and prosperous to finance the construction of many churches, monasteries and to donate expensive liturgical objects. The dedication on the Boston chalice, in fact, follows the form of inscriptions found on stone door lintels with the names of donors and Christograms in the 'dead cities'. In this case, a woman named Sara undoubtedly gave the valuable chalice to her local church in thanks for her answered prayers.

CHRISTINE KONDOLEON

## 188

### Reliquary of the True Cross

Southern Italy (?), late twelfth century or c. 1200  
Silver gilt, cloisonné opaque enamels on a silver gilt support, wood, glass paste, 24 × 11.7 × 1.5 cm

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, inv. no. CA 1554.  
PROVENANCE: acquired by F. Baudet de Boissière (from Chazet, Paris), Baudet sale, 12 April 1881.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Glorie 1883, no. 1554, pp. 440–1; Paris 1906, no. 1935, p. 487; Paris 1921, no. 355, pp. 340–1; Palermo 1925, no. 46, pp. 113–16.

This large reliquary cross has two horizontal arms supplemented by a third, shorter and oblique one, evoking the *suffraganeum* (foot support of Christ on the Cross), at the bottom. The cross may have been originally encased within a precious jewelled box. The wooden core is sheathed with a silver-gilt sheet embellished with enamel plaques at the intersection of the upper arms. The naked figure of Christ on the Cross in a loincloth is on one side, topped by an ornamental quatrefoil, while the empty cruciform cavity for relics, on the other side, is crowned by a medallion with a bust-length figure of Christ making the gesture of blessing. The arms have five rectangular tips, only three of which are original and bear an enamelled pattern of stepped crosses. The field is further enriched with oval and rectangular cabochons of glass paste bordered with twisted wire and a series of small loops that may have supported a string of pearls.

The enamelled Crucifixion reproduces tenth- or eleventh-century models, such as the one found on the reliquary box from the Cathedral of Monopoli, which also has a border of stepped crosses in enamel (New York 1997, no. 110, pp. 162–3). However, the elongated proportions of the body of Christ, the exclusive use of opaque enamels and the gold scroll embedded in the enamelled background all point to a later date in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The cellwork and figure drawing of the enamels and the physical appearance of the gilded surface, in their turn, bear similarities with South Italian works of this period, such as the Gospel-book cover of the Archbishop Alfano in Capua (Ravenna 1990, no. 77, pp. 194–5). The recurrence of the third short arm on a reliquary cross from Alba Fucenae in the Abruzzo region, now in the Palazzo Venezia, Rome (Frolow 1965, fig. 51, p. 159), favours an attribution to a South Italian workshop (Paris 1992, no. 255, pp. 340–1).

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

## 189

### Processional cross

Constantinople, first half of eleventh century  
Cast copper alloy, hammered, engraved and punched, 36 × 30.1 × 0.3 cm

Bowditch Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1144.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, no. 556; Sandoz 1960, pp. 36–7; Sandoz 1990, pp. 307–307, no. 32; Athens 1994, p. 283, no. 86 (A. Drandaki); Delavris and Fotopoulou 1997, p. 206, fig. 404; Athens 2000, pp. 350–1, no. 41 (A. Drandaki); Laidon 2007, pp. 180–1, no. 93 (A. Drandaki).

The flared arms of this processional cross end in roundels flanked by undecorated circular serifs at the corners. The six holes on the underside of the horizontal arms were for pendants (*pentelia*). On the front is the crucified Christ, wearing a loincloth. Inscribed within circles on the horizontal arms are the Virgin and St John the Theologian, both turned towards Christ. The Crucifixion scene is completed by the biblical texts: ΔΙΟΥ Ο ΥΙΟΥ(C) ΟΥ (Behold your Son) and ΔΙΟΥ Η ΜΗ(ΤΗ)Ρ ΟΥ (Behold your Mother) (John XIX, 26–7). On the upper roundel is St George.

On the back is the standing figure of the Virgin Mary Orans, Η ΒΑΛΑΧΕΡΝΗΤΗΚΑΝ (The Blachernitissa). She is framed on the roundels, by four healing saints: Kosmas to the left, Damianos to the right, Hermolaos above and Panteleimon below (now lost but identified by the surviving inscription).

The cross has three dedications: beneath Golgotha: Κ(ΥΡ)Ι Ε ΒΟΗΘΗ ΤΩ ΚΟ ΔΙΟΥ(Α)Ο ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗ) (Lord, help your servant John). It is punched and the script is similar to the inscriptions identifying the saints. John presumably commissioned the cross (Brussels 1982, no. Br. 16). There are two later inscriptions on both faces of the upper arm of the cross, mentioning two more donors: Leo Boreas (on the front) and George Syros (on the back). The recording of successive donors on processional crosses is not uncommon, as these objects were in use for a long period (Cotsonis 1994, pp. 29–32).

Parallels for the writing on the cross exist in manuscripts and inscriptions dating from the second half of the tenth to the middle of the eleventh century (Spatharakis 1981, II, figs 58, 64, 80, 88, 91; Mundell Mango 1994, p. 223). The iconography recalls the decoration of tenth- and eleventh-century reliquary crosses (Pitarakis 2006, pp. 68 ff.). A contemporary processional bronze cross, now in Princeton, is the closest parallel in technique and script (Princeton 1986, no. 68).

The representation of the Virgin Blachernitissa, in the honoured central position of the cross, indicates the major monument in which the cross was dedicated, the famous Church of the Virgin at Blachernai in Constantinople. The Virgin reproduces the type found on the marble icon at the Blachernai Palace which poured out miracle-working holy water (see also cat. 194). Thus, the five figures on the reverse of the cross all evoke healing, indicating that the cross was dedicated by John in thanksgiving or in petition for good health (Athens 2000, no. 41).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## 190

### Processional cross

Byzantium, probably twelfth century  
Bronze, engraved and embossed, 68 × 46.3 × 2.6 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. 40 2541.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Laidon et al. 1977, p. 36, no. 24; Martiniani-Reber 2004.

The cross is decorated on the front and the back. The inscriptions are peppered with spelling mistakes, which might indicate that it was manufactured outside Constantinople. The cross was restored before 1975. The front shows the Deposition from the Cross, with Christ (HCXC *sic*) supported by Joseph and Nicodemus, ΗΟΧΦ and ΝΗΚΟΔΗΜΟC. Both Joseph and Nicodemus wear long robes elaborated with engraved lines, a decorative effect which stands in stark contrast to the simplicity of Christ's loincloth. The Archangel Michael appears in the lower part. His imperial garb seems to have been misunderstood; the *loras* characteristically worn by emperors is represented by a zigzag border. Below him the Archangel Raphael (ΡΑΦΑΗΛ), whose wings are treated in a decorative manner, wears a deacon's long embroidered tunic (the dalmatic).

The lower arm of the cross shows the Visitation (Ο ΑΓΙΑCΜΟC), with Mary (ΜΡΘΥ) and Elizabeth embracing one another. It is odd that the letters of the name Elizabeth are written backwards, ΕΛΗCΑΒΕΤ. The left arm of the cross shows an abbreviated Nativity (Η ΓΕΝΗCΗC). Mary (ΜΡΘΥ) and the Child lie in the same position and their identically shaped bodies bear a strange similarity to one another. The angel on the right is named ΑΝΚΕΛΟC (*sic*). The appearance to the three Marys (Ε [sic] ΜΥΡΟΦΟΡΕ) appears on the right arm of the cross; the scene is so condensed that the angel foretelling the Resurrection is elided with the figure of Christ.

The reverse is surmounted by the Enthroned Christ holding the Gospels (HCXC). The iconography is not easy to read as the elements are so reduced. Below is the figure of the Archangel Uriel (ΟΥΡΗΛ), and another angel. The lower arm shows the Baptism, but treated in a strange fashion. The figures at the sides, the angel (ΑΝΚΕ) and John the Baptist (ΗΟΑΝΝΗC), are strongly emphasised, whereas the figure of Christ appears cramped. John the Baptist wears not his usual pelt, but a mantle adorned with circular decorations.

On the left arm of the cross is an abbreviated Anastasis (Η ΑΝΑCΤΑCΗC). As he descends to Hades, Christ (HCXC) seeks out the Just of the Old Testament, represented here by Adam (ΑΔΑΜ) and Eve (ΕΒΑ). On the right arm the Entombment completes the cycle. Joseph (ΗΟΧΦ) and Nicodemus (ΝΗΚΟΔΗΜΟC) carry the body of Christ, and make their way to the sepulchre, which is symbolised by a door.

The large size of this cross and its iconography, linked so closely to the story of Christ and particularly the Passion, may indicate that its function was to adorn a funerary chapel.

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

## 191

### Processional cross

Constantinople or north-western Anatolia, late eleventh or early twelfth century  
Silver, silver gilt, niello, iron core and bronze shaft, 73 × 39 cm

Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris, inv. no. CL. 4909.  
PROVENANCE: said to have been found near Eski elhir in Turkey; bought at Christie's, London, 5 April 1978, lot 17.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Geller 1981, Paris 1988, no. 31; Paris 1992, no. 243, pp. 349–50; New York 1997, no. 26, pp. 64–5.

This processional cross is of Latin shape with flaring arms ending with a pair of spherical melon-shaped serifs. One side is worked in repoussé and highlighted with gilding, and the other is nielloed and gilded. The repoussé side bears five figural medallions forming a Deisis and a rinceau pattern emanating from the central medallion. Christ is at the top, the Virgin flanked by two archangels in the centre and John the Baptist at the bottom. The decoration of the other side is intended to emphasise the relationship between Incarnation and Salvation. The Crucifixion at the top dominates the central composition formed by the Virgin Hodegetria, flanked by the scenes of the Annunciation and the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple on the side arms. The scene of the Virgin fled by an angel at the bottom of the Cross creates a short cycle from the Childhood of the Virgin, unusual subjects for metalwork (Lafontaine-Dosogne 1992, pp. 136–67). Below is the figure of the kneeling donor with his dedicatory inscription in Greek: 'Deisis [or Supplication] of the monk Kosmas'.

The layout of the cross, its iconography and decorative techniques link it to a small group of eleventh- or early twelfth-century processional crosses, including the Adrianople cross at the Benaki Museum, Athens, the fragmentary cross at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, the fragmentary pieces belonging to three crosses in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC, the cross at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the two crosses in the George Ortiz Collection, Geneva, and the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, respectively, and the one in Matkhvarichi (Svanetia) in Georgia, which is distinguished by its enamel medallions (Paris 1992, p. 329; New York 1997, nos 23–5, 27, pp. 59–64, 66–7; Cotsonis 1994, pp. 46–54 and nos 2–3, 5, pp. 68–78, 81–3). The Cluny cross is reported to have come from Eskişehir in north-western Anatolia, like the one in the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva (Bank 1980, p. 97; Mango 1988, pp. 41–8). This might suggest the attribution of both pieces to a workshop located in this area, although a Constantinopolitan origin is possible.

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS



## The Cross of Adrianople

Late tenth century.  
Silver sheets, with engraving, partial gilding and niello decoration, riveted around an iron core, 58.5 × 31 × 0.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1979/1.  
PROVENANCE: From Adrianople, where the cross was part of the ecclesiastical treasure of the Greek community, brought to Greece by refugees, following the Treaty of Lausanne, 1922.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bouras 1979, Athens 1994, no. 87, p. 264; A. Drandaki, *Sandini 1995*, New York 2007, no. 23, pp. 59–60; D. Kasterinos.

The cross of Adrianople (Edirne) is one of the best preserved of luxury processional crosses to have survived from the Middle Byzantine period. It is in the shape of a Latin cross, with small discs on the flaring ends of the arms. From the bottom projects a metal sheet, used both for affixing the cross in a stable socket and for carrying it in procession (Cotsonis 1994, pp. 8–37). In the centre at the front is a circular receptacle for an object now lost, possibly a relic, now replaced by a representation of the Resurrection dating from after 1453. The central medallion is surrounded by four busts, at the ends of the cross arms. At the top is the Pantokrator and at the bottom is the Theotokos in prayer. On the horizontal arms are the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. Busts of saints decorate the small discs on the finials of the arms, the top left one of which has been lost and replaced by a rosette. Represented on the vertical arm are hierarchs: at the top right St John Chrysostom and below SS. Basil and Nicholas. No doubt St Gregory the Theologian was originally represented on the lost disc, completing the sequence of the most important Fathers of the Church. The small discs on the horizontal arm are occupied by the healing saints Kosmas and Damianos (to the left) and the soldier saints Sisinnios and Prokopios (to the right). On the back, in the honoured central position, is St John the Baptist, flanked by SS. Constantine and Helen, and by SS. George and Theodore.

The cross has two donor inscriptions. On the front: +Κ(ΥΠ)Ε ΒΟΗΘΕΙ ΤΟΝ ΔΟΛΟΝ COY CINCINION AMHN (Lord, Help thy servant Sisinnios, Amen). On the back: +ΥΠΕΡ ΑΦΕΘΕΟC ΑΜ(ΑΡΤΙΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ) CINCINIOY ΚΕΙ ΙΩΑΝΟΥ ΠΡΕCΒΥΤΕΡΟΥ ΑΜ(ΗΝ) (For the redemption of sins of the servant of God Sisinnios and John the Elder, Amen).

Most likely the central medallion on the front originally contained wood from the True Cross, as with other processional crosses of the period (Cotsonis 1994, pp. 28–9; Sandini 1995, pp. 63–6). The relic would have reinforced the protective potency of the cross and this is why the place of honour at the centre was not occupied by Christ or the Theotokos. The placing of St John the Baptist at the centre on the back suggests that the cross was a donation to a church dedicated to him (Bouras 1979, p. 25).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## Gold cross with nielloed inscription

Eastern Mediterranean, eighth century (?)  
Gold, niello, height (including suspension loop) 7.2 cm; width 4 cm; weight 42.10 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 87.353.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no. 285, p. 47, pl. IV.

Gold cross with suspension loop, faceted arms and a central collet which would have originally contained a gem or glass paste. At the ends of the lateral arm and at the bottom of the vertical arm are three loops from which would have been suspended further gems (or perhaps the letters alpha and omega). On each arm of the cross is a nielloed Greek inscription: EM/OI/ΔΕ/MH/ΓΕ/ΝΟΙ/ΤΩ (top); ΚΑΥΧΑC (left); ΘΑΛΕΙΜΗ (right); ΕΝ/ΤΩ/CΤ/ΑΥ/ΡΩ/ΤΟΥ/ΚΥ/ΗΜ/ΩΜ/ΙΥ ΧΥ (bottom) (Εμοι δε μη γένοιτο καυχασθαι ετι μη εν τω σταυρω του Κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου); May God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ).

The text is a partial quotation from Galatians vi, 14, the missing second half of which continues: 'by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world'. Although the form of the cross can be compared with numerous Late Antique examples, the nielloed inscription is unparalleled. Gold crosses of this period often depict the crucified Christ flanked by busts of the Virgin, St John and the four Evangelists (Ross 2005, no. 15, pp. 21–2, pl. XXIII). The substitution of the figure of Christ for an inscription, and the emphasis placed by that inscription on the redemptive powers of the Cross, suggests that it may belong to the period of iconoclasm, when the Cross was one of the few images sanctioned by iconoclasts.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## Pectoral reliquary cross

Eleventh century  
Silver sheet, niello, 7.1 × 3.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. nos. 2092, 2093, 2094.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1994, no. 81, pp. 267–8; A. Drandaki, New York 1997, no. 124, pp. 172–3; D. Kasterinos, *Georgiadis 1999*, no. 124, pp. 227–3; A. Baltatzis, Athens 2000, no. 24, pp. 259–60; B. Pitarakis, *Ravenna 2001*, no. 79, p. 210; A. Drandaki, *Luben 2007*, no. 100, p. 193; A. Drandaki.

This silver pectoral reliquary cross, decorated with niello inlay, comprises two outer crosses, hinged together at the top and bottom by pins, containing an interior cross, with an opening intended to hold holy relics.

On the obverse is the Crucified Christ, wearing a long, sleeveless colobion, decorated with two vertical *clavi*. On the upper part of the cross is the abbreviated inscription IC XC, and on either side are the symbols of the sun and moon. On the reverse is the figure of the Virgin Orans standing on a pedestal, flanked by angels holding staffs. The hand of God appears above her. The combination of the Crucified Christ with the

Virgin Orans emphasises the idea of the Incarnation of Christ through the Virgin for the salvation of humankind (Cotsonis 1994, pp. 47–8). The soteriological message of the iconography suits well, and at the same time reinforces, the protective powers of the relics kept within the cross.

This cross belongs to a group of pectoral reliquaries that were particularly popular in the years after iconoclasm, from the ninth to the twelfth century. The most precious examples were made of gold, such as the famous Pliska reliquary cross (cat. 53), or silver, as is the case with the Benaki Museum example. Nevertheless, the impressive number of surviving similar reliquaries, produced in cheaper copper alloys and found throughout the Byzantine realm, indicates that amuletic jewellery of this type was fashionable in all regions and among all social strata of Byzantium (Pitarakis 2006, *passim*).

The iconography of Mary on this reliquary is the same as the apse decoration of the Church of the Virgin Chalkeon at Thessaloniki, dated to 1028. Apparently, this iconographic type, known earlier, such as the ninth-century apse decoration of the Virgin of the Pharos at Constantinople (Mango 1958, p. 182) or the contemporary miniature inserted in Ms Garrett 6 (New York 1997, pp. 90–1, no. 43 [K. Corrigan]), became increasingly popular during the eleventh century. The Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55) issued coins with this image of the Virgin bearing the epithet Blachernitissa, thus relating it to the miraculous icon of the Blachernai Palace (Grierson 1973, pp. 736, 745–7). The iconography of the Benaki Museum reliquary cross and the execution of its niello decoration suggest an eleventh-century date.

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, eleventh century  
Copper alloy, 7.3 × 4.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 35556.  
PROVENANCE: Former Prodromou Melion Collection; gift of P. Melion, May 1998.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 2000, no. 25, p. 312; Pitarakis 2006, no. 396, p. 311, fig. 610 on p. 68.

This copper-alloy pectoral reliquary cross is an engraved version of cat. 197. The Christ on the Cross, dressed in a colobion on the front side, is depicted alone, while the victorious formula ΙΗCΟΥ Χ(ΡΙCΤΟ)C ΝΗΚΑ (Jesus Christ conquers) replaces the customary Gospel quotation. The reverse bears the image of the full-length standing figure of the Mother of God framed by three star motifs. The Virgin has both hands raised in prayer, while an inscription invoking her as Theotokos (ΘΕΟΤΟΚΕ) is divided between the side arms. In the iconographic repertory of engraved copper-alloy crosses, the Virgin is glorified through the use of multiple

descriptions which derive from church hymnography. Next to the universal 'Mother of God' are the appellations 'Mother of Christ' and 'Panagia', which are not common on more precious cult objects. The variety of names for the Virgin may have been forced on the artists by the lack of stylistic variety permitted by the copper-alloy surface.

The category of engraved copper-alloy pectoral crosses, combining the Crucifixion, on one side, with the Virgin Orans, on the other, appears to have gradually supplanted the crosses with moulded relief decoration in the course of the eleventh century. However, a distinctive type with relief decoration combining the naked figure of Christ on the Cross in a loincloth on one side, with the Hodegetria on the other, becomes popular during the twelfth century in Russia and the Balkans (Pitarakis 1996, pp. 80, 237–41). The quality of drawing and workmanship of this example allows its attribution to an expert craftsman from a workshop probably located in Constantinople.

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

## Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, eleventh century  
Copper alloy, 8 × 4.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 35556.  
PROVENANCE: Bought in Istanbul, former collection of Prodromou Melion. Gift of P. Melion, May 1998.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 2000, no. 26, p. 312; Pitarakis 2006, no. 396, p. 311, fig. 610 on p. 68.

This copper-alloy pectoral reliquary cross belongs to the same category as the two previous ones. The standing Virgin Orans on one side, topped by an inscription identifying her as Panagia (ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ) is flanked by two bust-length figures identified as Peter (ΠΕΤΡΟC) and John (ΙΩΑΝΗC). The other side is dominated by the standing figure of St Stephen (Ο ΑΓΙΟC CΤΕΦΑΝΟC), also praying and flanked by two stylised censers crowned with small crosses that emphasise his protective power. St Stephen has a high-ranking place in the repertory of saints found on bronze crosses. He is preceded by SS. George, John, Peter and the Archangel Michael (Pitarakis 2006, p. 97 and Table 2, p. 108). Even his name, meaning 'crown' and so referring to victory, enhances the apotropaic message of the Cross and the idea of victory against evil forces.

The ornamental patterns used on the costumes and attributes display a taste for triangular patterns which may have been inspired by the form of the capital 'alpha' found in the inscriptions. The distinctive pattern of a circle inscribed within a crosspiece and the stylised footwear of St Stephen recur on several crosses of this category and are used in representations of Christ, the Virgin and various saints (Pitarakis 2006, nos 335, 374, 407, 409, 464, 448,

482). The differences in quality of workmanship of these popular objects reflects the taste and different social levels of patronage in Byzantium.

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

## Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, late tenth or eleventh century  
Copper alloy, 9.5 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 21990–91.  
PROVENANCE: Helen Stathatos Collection; entered Benaki Museum, Athens, 22 July 1970.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Xyngopoulou 1971, no. 33, p. 46, pl. 27; Athens 1994, no. 81, p. 253; Athens 2000, no. 23, p. 301; Pitarakis 2006, no. 19, p. 195.

This copper-alloy pectoral reliquary cross has flaring arms and consists of two hollow sides forming a box-like interior for encasing relics. The upper hinge, in a fragmentary state, served for attaching a suspension loop (now lost). The relief decoration on both sides is obtained by casting in a mould, while the inscriptions, facial features and costumes are highlighted with deep engravings. The layout of the cross is intended to emphasise the themes of Incarnation and Salvation. The Christ crucified, dressed in a colobion on the front side, is flanked by the standing figures of the Mother of God and John the Evangelist, who are shown gesturing in his direction. The customary scriptural verses ΙΔΕ Ο ΥΙΟC COY and ΙΔΟΥ Η ΜΗΤΗΡ COY (Behold your son and Behold your mother [John XIX, 26–7]) are engraved below the outstretched arms of Christ, while the word Φ(ΩC) (Light), inserted between the sun and the moon above the *titulus*, emphasises cosmic participation in the event. The reverse bears the image of the full-length standing figure of the Mother of God in prayer. She is framed by the medallions of the four Evangelists, who are identified by the first letter of their name engraved outside the medallion.

Recent archaeological records have shown that rather than being Early Christian souvenirs from the Holy Land, as had long been accepted, the hundreds of crosses of this type belong to a production of the late tenth or eleventh centuries that was massively distributed in Constantinople and Anatolia as a response to an intensification of the cult of the True Cross and an increasing demand for different kinds of relics at all levels of society (Pitarakis 2006). Their iconography is inspired from that of more precious models in gold, enamel and nielloed silver. These crosses were probably acquired at pilgrimage shrines and monasteries that had become repositories for collections of relics. Examples whose contents survive contain bits of wood and bone fragments encased in balm, pebbles and earth.

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

## Votive hand holding a cross

Syria-Palestine, sixth–eighth century  
Bronze, 24 × 10 cm; cross, 13 × 10 cm

Collection des Musées d'Art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AA 2004–05.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Martiniani-Reber 2005.

The origins of the votive hand can be traced back to pagan Antiquity. For example, the Phrygian god Sabazios, son of Jupiter, was the object of a cult whose material manifestation consisted of bronze hands, sometimes adorned with pine cones, lizards, snakes or phalluses. Large numbers of these hands have been found in different parts of the Roman Empire. Other hands are linked to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus (Boucher 1973, p. 142, nos 220–1, Painter 1977, pp. 16–17), or to that of Jupiter Keraunios. These cult objects are undoubtedly the precursors of Christian votive objects (New York 1979, pp. 184–5 and François 2004).

Although a good number of examples of pagan votive hands have survived, only about a dozen Christian hands are known, and these are now spread between various museums in Europe and the United States (Ross 1964). This example, with its tapering fingers and hollow palm, offers characteristics similar to those of another votive hand, also in the Zakos Collection, among them its extremely slim appearance, accentuated by the elongation of the fingers and exaggerated hollow of the palm. The thumb is unusually thick and long by comparison with the other fingers.

The hand, which is in good condition, was evidently meant to be firmly affixed, as a nail can be spotted in the centre of the support, which has a further three cavities for nails. It is identical to an example now in the museum of the Kykkos monastery in Cyprus (Perdikis 1998, p. 17).

Where their provenance is known, all surviving Christian votive hands seem to be Middle Eastern in origin, supporting an attribution to workshops in Syria-Palestine which ceased work after the rise of Islam. However, some researchers attribute them to the workshops of Constantinople (Paris 1992, p. 120, no. 67).

MARIELE MARTINIANI-REBER

## Pectoral cross with Four Evangelists

Constantinople (?), second half of the eleventh century  
Gold, filigree, cloisonné and *champlevé* enamel, emeralds, tourmaline, pearls, 9 × 6 × 1 cm

State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, inv. E-1816.  
PROVENANCE: Probably from Kiev, later in Uvarov Collection, Moscow; State Historical Museum, Moscow, from 1944; State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, from 1920.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Uvarov 1907, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 182–3; Frolow 1961, no. 77, pp. 252–6; Frolow 1965, no. 177, pp. 248, 249, 251; Bank 1966, no. 180; Darkovitch 1973, p. 279; Moscow 1977, vol. 2, no. 339, p. 180; Bank 1985, no. 274, fig. 100 p. 392; New York 1997, no. 122, pp. 171–2, fig. 100 p. 171.

The arms of the cross are decorated with round enamelled settings representing the four



Evangelists, St Matthew (top), St John the Theologian (bottom), St Luke (left) and St Mark (right). Red enamel inscriptions in Greek can be seen at the edges of these medallions. The missing central medallion probably depicted Christ blessing. The majority of the surface is adorned with floral and geometrical patterns. The Byzantine craftsman combined the cloisonné and *champlevé* enamel techniques and used a multicolour palette of black, white, red, green, yellow, dark- and light-blue enamels. The rolled filigree wire is very fine and the miniature images are highly detailed. The Evangelists' features, their hair, hands and garments, are varied and refined.

The high quality of the enamelling makes it possible that this cross was made in Constantinople. Boyd mentioned that the cross is comparable with some other objects executed in the second half of the eleventh century (New York 1997, p. 172). The original destination of this piece is unknown. Undoubtedly the cruciform cavity on the reverse was intended to house a certain relic and the loops on the vertical arm were used for hanging it. According to Kondakov, the cross had been adapted to become part of a votive crown or some other piece of complex jewellery (Kondakov 1892, pp. 170–1), but no precious objects of the Middle Byzantine period are known to contain similar details.

ELENA PILNIK

## 200

### Lapis-lazuli icon with Christ and the Virgin

Constantinople, first half of twelfth century

Lapis encrusted with gold, silver gilt, filigree, copper (the modern ring), wax resin, precious stones, one pearl, height 8.3 cm (to with the ring); lapis: 6.4 × 4.3 cm

Musee du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, n° 92. PROVENANCE: Formerly in the treasury of the Abbey of Saint-Denis, mentioned for the first time in the abbey inventory of 1510; deposited in the Museum central des arts et des manufactures de la Couronne, 5 December 1793. SELECTED REFERENCES: Labordé 1853, no. 713; Barbet de Joué 1865, pl. 82; Marguet de Vaulx 1914, no. 270, pl. 117; Paris 1931, no. 157; Montespinois-Ferencsac and Gaboué-Chopin 1973, vol. 1 and 2, no. 40, vol. 3, pp. 46–7, pl. 29; Paris 1984, no. 334; Paris 1991, no. 30; Paris 1992, no. 133; New York 1997, no. 133

This twin-sided cameo is carved from lapis lazuli. With the famous Christ in the Moscow Kremlin Museum (New York 1997, no. 129), this is one of the finest surviving Byzantine cameos in this precious stone, seldom used by the Byzantines for making cameos or intaglios. One side depicts Christ blessing and the other the Virgin praying. The letters of the inscription, the haloes, the crosses on the Virgin's robe, the adornments on the book held by Christ and the two stylised bushes are all encrusted with gold. This process, reminiscent of the silver damascening process used on a group of brass doors in the eleventh century (cat. 265), is very rare on hard stone. The style of the relief carving fits a twelfth-century date, and the stylised design of the bushes can be paralleled in the first half of the twelfth century, notably with the enamelled foliage of the True Cross of Maria

Commene in Eine-Audenarde (Brussels 1982, o. 21).

The mount in silver gilt originally had alternating pearls, turquoises and projecting filigree rosettes and the vanished edge metal strips had rows of pearls. The mount is hollow and filled with a dense wax resin to provide a measure of solidity. The bezels holding the pearls and turquoises, like those holding the filigree rosettes, were simply fixed with wax to the resin support, the metal having been cut away to accommodate them. This technique appears on the famous Jaucourt True Cross reliquary in the Louvre (Paris 1992, no. 249) and avoids the necessity for welding or soldering. The filigree rosettes recall those that were widespread in Byzantine marble sculpture from the eleventh century on, and in jewellery. So it is very likely that the mount, which does not resemble any surviving Byzantine metalwork of a later period, dates from the same period as the cameo, an exceptional circumstance for a Byzantine cameo dating from before the thirteenth century. Originally furnished with a ring, whose guide lugs still survive, the icon must have been attached to a chain which would have allowed it to worn as an *enkolpion*, or to be hung in a sanctuary or a princely chapel.

JANNIC DURAND

## 201

### Reliquary *enkolpion*

Mid- to late tenth century (?)

Gold, silver gilt and cloisonné enamel, 3.8 × 3.2 × 0.6 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. The Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund, 66.32.8. SELECTED REFERENCES: Richmond 1994, no. 41, pp. 116–19 (with earlier bibliography); New York 1997, no. 100, p. 109

This small quatrefoil reliquary consists of two enamelled plaques that form the exterior surfaces of a small container. Both sides are decorated with figures in cloisonné enamel. Inside the container is an attached small cross-shaped compartment for most likely a particle of the True Cross. On its obverse Christ (IC XC) stands in the centre in full height flanked by the busts of the Apostles Paul on the left and Peter on the right. Peter holds the cross staff and Paul a book. On the reverse in a similar composition the Virgin Mary stands in the centre in an orant position flanked by the busts of the Evangelists Luke and John. These two figures were probably chosen to flank her, since both had a direct relationship with her: Luke supposedly painted a portrait of the Virgin and John is the Apostle chosen by Christ while on the Cross, when he said 'this is your son' to her and 'this is your mother' to John, to take care of her after his death on the Cross. It is believed that she lived with him in Ephesus until her death. This all relates very neatly to the fact that this reliquary most likely contained a fragment of the Cross. Christ on the obverse with the two main Apostles represents the foundation of the Church through Peter and his

teachings through Paul. All figures are identified by partial inscriptions placed awkwardly in red inferior lettering on the gold ground around them (a number of them have lost the enamel). Overall the craftsmanship of the enamel work is of low quality, although the use of colour in the garments belies this fact. Christ and the Virgin are clad in dark purple, the Apostles in hues of light- and dark-blue vertical alternating segments.

JOEL KALAVREZOU

## 202

### Cameo with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, early thirteenth century (cameo); Serbia, Peč or Prizren, early seventeenth century (setting). Jasper green, cutting: silver, hammering gilding; enamel (blue and green); carnelian, mother-of-pearl, glass paste, cameo length 4 cm; width 3.5 cm; setting length 7.2 cm; width 6 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 4388. SELECTED REFERENCES: Radolović 1969a, Paris 1983, no. 24; Popović 1989, pp. 7–31; Holmki 2006, no. 3.4

The bust of Christ is executed on an ellipsoid olive-green piece of stone with red traces, in high relief, with powerful and exact cuts. The inscription (ICXC) is incised by plain strokes and Christ has a cruciform nimbus. His expression is peaceful, his hair long and parted. His garment (himation) covers the bust and its folds appear very soft. The right arm is raised in a sign of blessing. He holds a Gospel-book in his left hand; its covers are decorated with incised, simple small circles placed crosswise. This exquisite cameo forms a pair with the green jasper cameo depicting the Mother of God Orans, which is kept in the Serbian monastery of Hilandar on Mount Athos. The identical material and manner of execution of both cameos and a story about the Mother of God Orans having been taken to Hilandar by St Sava, the first Serbian archbishop, makes it likely that the cameo with Christ discussed here has a similar history.

The fitting follows the shape of the cameo; it is ellipsoid and has cruciform bezels for cabochons of various colours. The front side of the fitting is decorated with stylised chickpea shoots whose leaves are executed in green and blue enamel. On the back, along the rim, runs the same ornamental decoration, and in the oval gilded medallion is the bust of the Mother of God (Theotokos-Oranta) in shallow relief with the initials (MPΘY: IC XC). It should be noted that here the Mother of God has a long band over her arms representing her protecting veil.

The cameo was acquired by the Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, with the collection of Stanislav Simonović who bought it at Peč. The fitting was manufactured in Kosovo, and the cameo may have been used as a pectoral icon by a priest connected with Dečani or the Peč Patriarchate.

DIJAN MILOVANOVIC

## 203

### Pendant with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople (?), eleventh or twelfth century in a sixteenth-century mount. Rock crystal, gold, precious stones, pearls (mount), 6.1 × 6 × 1.2 cm (including mount)

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2113. SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, no. 144, p. 199; Dallas 1990, pp. 84–5, pl. 63; Athens 1991, no. 79, p. 257, pl. 79; Georgiada 1999, no. 139, pp. 349–51, fig. 264

Represented in relief at the centre of this octagonal rock-crystal medallion is Christ Pantokrator, in bust. The inscription ICXC O IANTOKPATΩP frames Christ, who has a cross nimbus and holds a closed book in his left hand and blesses with his right. The elegant proportions and face of Christ link the medallion with a series of hard-stone cameos with busts of holy figures, in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 1962, no. 120), Paris (Paris 1992, nos 186, 191, 201, 202), State Historical Museum, Moscow, and the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Bank 1985, p. 298, no. 155, 156), which date from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. It is a powerful image despite the low relief and the abstract effect of the transparent material.

Rock crystal, a stone accredited with magical-curative properties in the Byzantine world (Psellus, *Philosophica*, p. 118), was used widely in Islam and the West, mainly in larger objects of sacred or secular character, such as reliquaries and lamps (Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch 1985; Shalem 1994). Although the surviving Byzantine artefacts in 'cold stone', as it was named characteristically in Byzantium, dated after the sixth century are very few (Mundell Mango 2003, pp. 368–9, 372), the texts confirm their existence during the Middle and Late Byzantine periods too. Two epigrams by Manuel Philes (thirteenth century) refer to rock-crystal icons of Christ (Philes, *Carmina*, I, pp. 65–6, II, p. 38), as well as one other *enkolpion* with the image of Christ, in the same material, which is dated to the eleventh century, showing the wide popularity of this type of image (London 1987a, no. 32).

Originally the medallion was intended to adorn a larger object, such as the cover of a holy book or a reliquary, or the frame of an icon, as is indicated by the cylindrical protuberance on its back. The precious material, the quality of the craftsmanship and, very possibly, its value as an heirloom led a sixteenth-century owner to incorporate it into a pectoral ornament by setting it in the intricate mount of gold, precious stones and pearls that it has today.

VASSILIKI FOIKOLOU

## 204

### New Testament, folio 178r

Mid-twelfth century, Constantinople. Parchment, 20.5 × 15.5 cm, III + 431 folios. Contents: Eusebius' letter to Carpianus (17r–17v); Four Gospels

(24r–222r), Acts (232r–287r), Catholic Epistles (287bis r–312r), Pauline Epistles (313r–424r), the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (425r), with lists of Gospel pericopes for immovable and movable feasts of the year (15r–16r); lists of Epistle pericopes for the movable and immovable feasts of the year (224bis–230r). Binding: the silver cover, produced in Nuremberg and inscribed with the name of the book's eighteenth-century owner, Hieronymus Wilhelm Ebner von Eschenbach, bears a tenth-century Byzantine ivory plaque with the enthroned Christ Pantokrator

Bodleian Library, Oxford, Auct. T. inf. I. 10 (Msc. 196, S.C. 2618). PROVENANCE: at the Hodegon monastery in 1513 and still in Constantinople in 1515, the book was acquired from the East by Hieronymus Wilhelm Ebner von Eschenbach (1673–1752), the State Archivist in Nuremberg, sold to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, on 19 November 1819 at the auction house Payne and Foss. SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, p. 307, no. 296, fig. 296; Meredith 1966, pp. 419–24 with earlier bibliography; London 1994, pp. 161–3, no. 178

Named after its eighteenth-century owner, the Codex Ebnerianus is among the finest illuminated books from twelfth-century Byzantium and the most meticulously painted of the so-called Kokkinobaphos group of Constantinopolitan books (see also cat. 59). Illuminated New Testaments are rarer in Byzantium than illuminated Gospels, and survive above all from the twelfth century, presumably in response to the period's vogue for private devotional volumes with New Testament content. The Codex Ebnerianus is striking among them for its imaginative energy, seen both in its effulgent ornament and in its extension through Acts and the Epistles of the iconographic formula used in many twelfth-century Gospel-books, pairing a sacred author with a feast icon. The manuscript has played a key role in scholars' understanding of the luxury book trade in both twelfth- and fourteenth-century Constantinople.

Long assigned by its sheer quality to the very beginning of the twelfth century, the book belongs on the basis of its script to the mid-century, thus shattering the conception of the Kokkinobaphos group as a coherent scriptorium slowly devolving from initial brilliance to dry repetitiveness. The group is no longer interpreted as a scriptorium, but rather as an artistic manner practised by one or more painters working with different scribes and patrons and varied levels of financial investment. At the end of the fourteenth century, the Ebnerianus was in the Hodegon monastery, where the scribe Joasaph altered it for liturgical use. There its illumination must have provided a model for a late-fourteenth-century book now in Venice (Biblioteca Marciana I. 8), thus clarifying what had seemed an oddly late coda to the otherwise entirely twelfth-century Kokkinobaphos group.

ANNEMARIE WEYL GARR

## 205

### Lectionary with the Last Supper, folio 9r

Constantinople or Asia Minor, around 900. Parchment, 32.8 × 26.5 cm

National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, cod. gr. 21. SELECTED REFERENCES: Labkovskaja 1977, pp. 3–116; Lectionary 1994

This is one of the earliest manuscripts after iconoclasm and the text is written in uncials. Only sixteen folios survive, and this is in part by chance. The leaves were found bound into a twelfth-century manuscript which in 1858 the Bishop of Trebizond presented to Tsar Alexander II. When it entered the imperial library these folios were taken out and listed as gr. 21. A sixteenth page with the Baptism was later found by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus in Trebizond, and this was purchased by the library and files as gr. 21a.

The Last Supper is an example of the arrangement of the book. Below the scene painted within an imbricated border is the reading for Holy Thursday, starting with Matthew XXVI, 20. In the painting, Christ and the Apostles are sitting inside a building around a sigma-shaped table, which was the form encountered in Early Byzantine manuscripts, such as the sixth-century Sinope Gospels (cat. 49), suggesting that the artists had access to a manuscript that had escaped destruction during iconoclasm, or else were influenced by the artists of the ninth- and tenth-century wall paintings in the rock-cut churches of Cappadocia, who also painted imagery which partly reflects earlier models and partly has the new ideas which were developed after iconoclasm. Christ, on the extreme left, is in the position of honour and breaks the bread. Peter reclines opposite him, stretching out his hands like the eleven others. Judas, dark-haired, sits upright at the front, his hand touching his mouth. The bowl on the table contains a fish, the symbol of Christ.

The fragmentary 'Trebizond Gospels' includes a portrait of St Mark, the Baptism, the Marriage at Cana, the Doubting of Thomas, Christ's Appearance to the Marys, and the Washing of Feet. It may have been painted in Constantinople, but several scholars have preferred to see it as 'provincial' work. In this respect it is important evidence for understanding how art was revived after iconoclasm and how far Byzantine art was created in Constantinople or was a much broader geographical development.

ROBIN CORMACK

## 206

### Icon with the Annunciation and saints

Late twelfth century. Gilt-silver sheet, chased and repoussé, 31 × 27 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 3679. SELECTED REFERENCES: Drandaki 2001; Balthazani 2003, pp. 125–6

This Annunciation is a rare survival of an all-metal icon, described in sources as 'αργυροειδὲς χρυσόειον', or 'ολοτρεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁλοκομήτου'. Gabriel approaches the Virgin with his hand raised in blessing. The Virgin Mary confronts him standing. Her house functions as a frame that surrounds and emphasises her figure. A smaller



building is depicted behind Gabriel. From a quadrant filled with stars at the top left corner, the hand of God emerges, and rays of light descend. The border has elaborate leaf-scrolls, enclosing palmettes. The background of this rich vegetal ornamentation is finely punched.

In the top and bottom borders, six now empty roundels would originally have held silver or enamel medallions. In the vertical borders the rinceaux are interrupted by two rectangular silver plaquettes with the portraits of saints, possibly the Apostles Peter and Luke, in a different scale and style. Technical examination has verified that Luke on the right is a later addition.

The double scrolls surrounding the palmettes on the border are encountered in firmly dated twelfth–early thirteenth-century manuscripts (Likhachova 1977, p. 33; Spatharakis 1981, figs 220, 227, 253, 273; New York 1997, no. 46, p. 93 [J.C. Anderson]). The closest parallel to the Benaki Annunciation is to be found in the silver-gilt cover of a Constantinopolitan reliquary in the Louvre, Paris, depicting the Marys at the Tomb, which dates from the second half of the twelfth century (Paris 2001b, pp. 73–7, no. 20 [J. Durand]). A dating in that period for the Benaki silver icon is further suggested by the imposing depiction of the hand of God sending divine rays towards the Virgin, a feature of the iconography of the Annunciation that became popular during that period, inspired by the theological debates of the time (Kitzinger 1984, pp. 99–115).

An almost identical composition is repeated on the border of the late thirteenth-century silver revetment of the Virgin and Child icon from the Monastery of Zarzma, Georgia (Velmans 2002, pp. 317–23), suggesting that the two representations, despite their different date, scale and quality, are clearly dependent on a common model.

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## 207

Handle of a standing censer (*katzion*)

Constantinople, c. 1300  
Bronze, cast with engraved decorative detail, 28.6 × 21 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 4102  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vegley 1909–10, no. 377–78; Boreas 1981, pp. 68–69; Boreas 1982, no. 8; Boreas 1992, no. 89; A. Drandaki, *Delos and the Peloponnese* 1977, fig. 427; Athens 2001, pp. 371–5, no. 42 (A. Drandaki); New York 2004, p. 128, no. 64 (A. Drandaki)

The large ogee-shaped handle depicts the Virgin Hodegetria holding Christ. The background is decorated with incised foliate scrolls, terminating in three- or five-lobed palmettes and semi-palmettes and enclosing engraved inscriptions ΜΗΡΘΕΟΥ ΗΘΕΡΑΠΙΩΤΗΤΑ and ΙC XC. The representation has parallels in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century metalwork (Athens 2000, no. 42 [A. Drandaki]).

The handle belongs to a type of free-standing censer known as *katzion* or *katsion*, and mentioned

in monastic charters (*typika*) from the eleventh century (Gautier 1981, p. 91, col. 1222). Such censers are seen in representations of the Dormition of the Virgin or of saints, and so have been associated with funeral rites – a *katzion* was indeed found in a tomb at Mistra (Xyngopoulos 1930, pp. 129–30; Drandakis 1952, p. 504, fig. 10). But they also appear in processional scenes involving icons, implying a wider ritual usage (Sevchenko 1995, fig. 6). The possibility of other uses for this type of censer is suggested by the existence of similarly shaped incense burners with secular decoration, pointing to a domestic rather than ecclesiastical environment (Byzantine Museum 2005, p. 318, no. 307).

The broad handles of such censers usually depicted the patron saint of the church where the vessel was to be used, suggesting this example came from a church of the Virgin Therapiotissa. A text of 1394 in the *Acta Patriarchatus* mentions the theft of silver – presumably the revetment – from the venerable icon of the Virgin Therapiotissa (Miklosich and Müller 1860–90, p. 203; Oikonomides 1991, p. 39). This confirms the existence of a devotional icon of that name which is reproduced in the *katzion*. The location of this icon can be identified with the Constantinopolitan Church of the Virgin Therapiotissa recorded in 1348–49 by the Russian pilgrim Stephen of Novgorod (Majeska 1981, pp. 359–65; Majeska 2002, p. 104).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

## 208

Plaque with St George

Asia Minor, fourteenth century  
Bronze, gilded, hammered and engraved, silver, 10 × 9.5 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Karallipodou Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1567  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Chatzidakis and Scamporrino 2007, no. 99, p. 106 (C. Scamporrino)

The almost square plaque has an appliqué banded frame of silver, without gilding and with large foliate ornaments. The original hook for hanging the icon is preserved at the top. The condition is good, and most of the gilding has survived, but the lower right corner of the frame is missing. The inscription reads: Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ Ο ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΑΝΟΣ (Saint George the Patriarchan).

St George is on horseback with his head and torso *en face*, while his steed trots to the right. He wears full armour and a cloak fastened on the right shoulder, next to the neck, covering his left shoulder and fluttering behind the right arm. Below the chest is the *cingulum* tied in a knot. The imbrications on the breastplate are lozenge-shaped. In his left hand he holds the reins and in the right a spear, the tip of which reaches to the right upper corner of the plaque. His head is large in proportion to his body. The round youthful face has regular and refined features. On his thick curly hair is a diadem consisting of a row of

medallions. The halo is lightly embossed. The relief is executed in hammered technique. The details on the garments, the horse's mane and the inscription are incised.

The shape of certain letters in the inscription, particularly the Α, is rather archaic; however, the rendering of the imbrications on the breastplate indicates a date in the fourteenth century. The epithet Patriarchan derives from a famous shrine of the saint, at Phatire in Paphlagonia, which was named 'the Phatrynon', after the place (TIB 9, 148 and 260).

MICHELE BACCI

## 209

Plaque with St Niketas

Thirteenth century  
Bronze, hammered, gilded, incised, 7.3 × 6.4 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Karallipodou Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1099  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Chatzidakis and Scamporrino 2007, no. 97, p. 104 (C. Scamporrino)

The greater part of the gilding is preserved and there is little damage to the surface. The border band on the lower edge is missing. The repoussé inscription on each side of the halo reads: Ο ΑΓΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΗΤΑΣ Ο ΣΑΙΝΤ ΝΙΚΕΤΑΣ. On either side of the shoulders, the incised inscription reads: ΑΓΙΕ ΝΙΚΗΤΑ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ ΤΩ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ ΧΡΥΣΟΥ (Saint Niketas help thy servant O Ch M). The letters Ο Χ Μ, with which the incised inscription concludes, have not been deciphered.

The figure is framed by a narrow, slightly raised band. The saint is portrayed to the waist and in frontal pose, with both hands in front of the chest. In his right hand he holds a martyr's cross and with the left he venerates, with the palm outwards. His facial features are handsome and regular, with a thin straight nose, large eyes and small mouth. His luxuriant curly hair falls on his shoulders and his beard is relatively short and rounded. He wears a courtly cloak with *tablion*, which is fastened above the right shoulder with a round fibula and leaves the right arm free. Visible on the part of the shoulder not covered by the cloak is part of the *maniakes* (a gold-embroidered or sometimes gold ornament of the costume, which surrounded the neckline and continued onto the shoulders). *Maniakes* and *tablion* are decorated with engraved lozenges and tiny roundels, denoting the embroidery and the pearls that embellished them. Encircling the saint's head is an incised halo.

The elegant feature and modelling of the body suggest a date in the thirteenth century. The only discordant note is the disproportionately small right arm.

MICHELE BACCI

## 210

Chalice veil

Late thirteenth–early fourteenth century  
Silk embroidered with silver and gilded silver thread, 63.5 × 63.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 4102  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sutton 1929, fig. 11; V. Chatzidakis 1953, 3–4, pl. A–B; Chatzidakis 1955, 10, New York 2004, no. 46, pp. 310–11 (A. Ballian)

This veil depicts the *Metalepsis* (partaking of wine), which forms part of the representation of the Communion of the Apostles. Christ holds in his right hand a jewelled chalice, flanked by two seraphim instead of the usual angels, and stands behind the altar, which is covered by a cloth decorated with cross-shaped *gammata* (corner-pieces). Above is an impressive hemispherical ciborium edged with red moulding and supported on double colonnettes.

A similar veil must originally have depicted the *Metadoxis* (distribution of bread), as other early surviving chalice and paten veils come in pairs with complementary representations such as those in Halberstadt and Castell'Arquato (Johnstone 1967, pls 85–8; Millet 1947, pls CLIV–CLV). On the Benaki veil Christ is shown from the front, as in the apse of St Sophia in Ohrid and the chalice veil in Chilandar monastery (Bogdanović, Djurić and Medaković 1978, fig. 101), but the portrayal is exceptionally plain and strikingly intense. The Apostles are not depicted and on the altar cloth are two crosses instead of the Communion vessels (see Rome 2000, no. 78, pp. 212–13).

Stylistically the compact, almost square figure of Christ recalls the style of painting found in Constantinople and Thessaloniki between 1290 and 1310. The pale colour and the calm features of Christ recall the Pantokrator in the Protaton, depicted on the marble *proskynetarion*, which, like the ciborium on the veil, is supported on a double colonnette with relief ornamentation painted red (Teteriatnikov 1999, p. 103, fig. 2). Around the veil the non-accented liturgical inscription (Matthew xxvi, 26–8) is written in 'distinctive, epigraphic majuscule'. This type of script, common in the Middle Byzantine era, underwent a striking revival in some late thirteenth-century manuscripts. Also typical of earlier manuscripts and metalwork is the direction of the inscription, which starts at the top of the frame, continues on the right side and then on the left, and terminates at the bottom.

ANNA BALLIAN

## 211

Gospels with the Passion of Christ, folio 89v–90r

Constantinople, second half of eleventh century  
Parchment, 30 × 23.2 cm

Biblioteca Palatina di Parma, Ms. Pal. 5  
PROVENANCE: Monastery of San Salvatore, Messina, between 1206–08 and 1209; Biblioteca Buonvisi, Lucca, collection of Karl Ludwig of Bourbon-Parma shortly after 1844; Biblioteca Palatina, Parma, since 1865.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Foti 1992, p. 28; Eleuteri 1993, pp. 3–13, pl. 1–4; G. Fiaccadori, with full retrospective bibliography, P. Lazzari, Parma 2001, no. 57, pp. 168–72 (G. Fiaccadori); Wynn 2000–03, p. 104.

This luxury set of the Gospels with the use of gold leaf in many portions of the text and a high standard of illuminations (some now flaked) can be ascribed to Constantinople in the eleventh century. The text of the Gospels is written in a script known as *Perlschrift*, while other passages such as titles are in Alexandrian or in epigraphic capitals. It resembles the contemporary but smaller book, E.D. Clarke Ms. 10 in the Bodleian Library (Parma 2001, p. 270 [G. Fiaccadori]), while various details of the decoration direct us to a well-documented area of manuscript production whose output includes, among others, Vat. Gr. 1156 (Rome 2000b, p. 247 [F.D'Aiuto]), with which this shares some features, including the layout into squares of the scenes depicted in folios 11v–12r and 89v–90r, and also the red and blue fabrics in the full-page miniature depicting the Evangelists, or indeed the decoration in *Blütenblattstil* of the opening pages; these consist of New Testament scenes painted inside quadrilobes. The layout of folio 90r shows the high density of illustrations on the page, with the sequence from the Agony in the Garden, the Betrayal by Judas and Denial of Peter to the Crucifixion and taking Christ down from the Cross, all the pictures framed by a luxuriant decorative border.

The manuscript came to Malta from Constantinople between 1206–08 and 1229, as is documented by a series of annotations (Fiaccadori, in Eleuteri 1993), and before 1470 was transferred to the Monastery of San Salvatore *de lingua phari* in Messina, as is clearly shown by folios 1–3, now detached and preserved with the earlier binding. These pages formed part of a manuscript from which folios 278r–281v of another manuscript (Messan. gr. 98 [Foti 1992]) also came. Next, the Gospels were in the Biblioteca Buonvisi in Lucca, and then entered the collection of Karl Ludwig of Bourbon-Parma shortly after 1824. The manuscript has been the property of the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma since 1865, when Karl Ludwig's library was acquired.

SILVIA SCIPIONI

## 212

Epitaphios of Nicholas Eudaimonioannes

Constantinople, Thessaloniki or the Peloponnese, 1406/07  
Crimson silk with silver, silver-gilt, and coloured threads, 85 × 140 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, B.218.1069  
PROVENANCE: Sicily; recorded in 1751 as having come from Sicily in 1741 to the Monastery of the Santi Apostoli in Naples; bought by the museum from Canon. Frate Rock in 1861.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1964, no. 205, pp. 111–12 (H. Granger-Taylor); New York 2004, no. 101, pp. 316–17 (W. T. Woodfin)

This rich embroidery was an Epitaphios (or *Grand Aor*), Starting in the early fourteenth century, as part of the symbolism of the Easter ceremonies marking the death and resurrection of Christ, the Epitaphios was used in the Byzantine ritual of Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and placed on

the altar table for the rest of the Paschal season until Ascension Day. At Vespers on Good Friday the Epitaphios was taken from the altar and set up in the centre of the church and decorated to symbolise the tomb of Christ. The faithful mourned at the Epitaphios until Matins on Holy Saturday. It was then carried in solemn procession outside the church, brought back in and laid on the altar in preparation for the joyful liturgy at midnight.

This Epitaphios represents the dead Christ on the stone of unction (a relic kept in the monastery of the Pantokrator at Constantinople since the twelfth century), holy angels in stoles on each side with liturgical fans, and the four Evangelists in the corners. The background is filled with a symbolic decoration of a scrolling vine (an unusual feature). The evocations of the Epitaphios are recalled in the Greek inscriptions around the border, which come from the *troparia* (hymns) for Easter: 'The noble Joseph, taking down your spotless body from the wood and wrapping it in a clean shroud with aromatic spices, carefully laid it in a new tomb' and 'The ointments used for human beings are lying here, but Christ after suffering death has shown himself again in another form.' A third inscription records the donation of the embroidery: 'Prayer of the servant of God Nicholas Eudaimonioannes with his wife and children in the year 6915, indiction 15 [= 1406/07]'. This name is known as among the ruling classes of Late Byzantine Morea, and he may have been based at Monemvasia – he is probably the man of this name who was the imperial ambassador to the Venetians in 1416 and representative at the Council of Constance from 1414 to 1417. The cloth was presumably a gift to a church in the region of Monemvasia.

ROBIN GORMACK

## 213

Wall tile with an image of St Nicholas

Probably Constantinople, tenth century  
Coloured and transparent glazes on white ceramic, 16.8 × 16.4 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. 48.208.1

## 214

Wall tile with an image of St Arcthes

Probably Constantinople, tenth century  
Coloured and transparent glazes on white ceramic, 17.2 × 17.1 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. 48.208.2

PROVENANCE: discovered in Asia Minor close to Istanbul, c. 1950; purchased by Nikos Anghelidis, Istanbul, c. 1952; purchased by Robert E. Hecht Jr., Rumson, MD, 1976; purchased by the Walters Art Gallery (now Walters Art Museum), 1976.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: 'Cocche de la Forêt' 1978, pp. 217–18; Athens 1964, nos. 299–300, pp. 490–91 and 516 (D. Talbot Rice); New York 1997, no. 10, pp. 43–4 (J. Maguire); Gerstel and Lauffenberger 2001, nos. A.19 and A.22, pp. 47–50, 150 and 154 (S. Gerstel), with bibliography.

These tiles, not necessarily unearthed together, come from two separate sets of uniform half-length images of saints labelled in Greek as



Nicholas, Paraskeve and James in one case, and Arethas (LCI, vol. 5, cols 242–3), Basil and Panteleimon in the other. Their brittle, thinly glazed ceramic is not weather-resistant, hence they must originally have been attached to the inside walls or stone furniture of a building, most probably a church. Neither set survives complete. The one with St Nicholas is likely also to have included ornamented squares, now lost, that alternated with the figural ones. Composed of both vertical and horizontal strips, this set may have framed a larger holy image, perhaps rendered in mosaic or carved in marble (compare New York 1997, nos 233 and 303, pp. 345 and 465). The series that includes the martyr Arethas (d. 523) could have lined an interior cornice, possibly that of an altar screen.

The images here are drawn and coloured in a technique typical of a rare variety of Byzantine glazed pottery ('Type I' in Sanders 2001) that archaeologists find in tenth- or eleventh-century strata. Similar tiles have been excavated in Istanbul at two churches dated 907 and 920–22, respectively (Gerstel and Lauffenburger 2001, pp. 189–99), and at various places in Preslav, capital of Bulgaria from 893 to 969 (New York 1997, nos 222–3, pp. 329–30; Rome 2000, nos 50–5, pp. 156–62). The vegetal ornament repeated above and below the image of St Nicholas also occurs in tenth-century Byzantine book illumination (Spatharakis 1981, nos 17–20, 41, figs 39, 42, 46, 80). The artist, probably trying his brush for future work, lightly sketched the curves of another similar motif on the back of the St Nicholas tile.

GEORGE R. PARFULOV

## 215

### *The Raising of Lazarus*

Twelfth century  
Egg tempera on wood, 21.5 × 24 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, 638 060

PROVENANCE: purchased from a private collection  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Williamson et al. 1975, pp. 307–11, 308; 309; 310; 311; 312; 313; 314; 315; 316; 317; 318; 319; 320; 321; 322; 323; 324; 325; 326; 327; 328; 329; 330; 331; 332; 333; 334; 335; 336; 337; 338; 339; 340; 341; 342; 343; 344; 345; 346; 347; 348; 349; 350; 351; 352; 353; 354; 355; 356; 357; 358; 359; 360; 361; 362; 363; 364; 365; 366; 367; 368; 369; 370; 371; 372; 373; 374; 375; 376; 377; 378; 379; 380; 381; 382; 383; 384; 385; 386; 387; 388; 389; 390; 391; 392; 393; 394; 395; 396; 397; 398; 399; 400; 401; 402; 403; 404; 405; 406; 407; 408; 409; 410; 411; 412; 413; 414; 415; 416; 417; 418; 419; 420; 421; 422; 423; 424; 425; 426; 427; 428; 429; 430; 431; 432; 433; 434; 435; 436; 437; 438; 439; 440; 441; 442; 443; 444; 445; 446; 447; 448; 449; 450; 451; 452; 453; 454; 455; 456; 457; 458; 459; 460; 461; 462; 463; 464; 465; 466; 467; 468; 469; 470; 471; 472; 473; 474; 475; 476; 477; 478; 479; 480; 481; 482; 483; 484; 485; 486; 487; 488; 489; 490; 491; 492; 493; 494; 495; 496; 497; 498; 499; 500; 501; 502; 503; 504; 505; 506; 507; 508; 509; 510; 511; 512; 513; 514; 515; 516; 517; 518; 519; 520; 521; 522; 523; 524; 525; 526; 527; 528; 529; 530; 531; 532; 533; 534; 535; 536; 537; 538; 539; 540; 541; 542; 543; 544; 545; 546; 547; 548; 549; 550; 551; 552; 553; 554; 555; 556; 557; 558; 559; 560; 561; 562; 563; 564; 565; 566; 567; 568; 569; 570; 571; 572; 573; 574; 575; 576; 577; 578; 579; 580; 581; 582; 583; 584; 585; 586; 587; 588; 589; 590; 591; 592; 593; 594; 595; 596; 597; 598; 599; 600; 601; 602; 603; 604; 605; 606; 607; 608; 609; 610; 611; 612; 613; 614; 615; 616; 617; 618; 619; 620; 621; 622; 623; 624; 625; 626; 627; 628; 629; 630; 631; 632; 633; 634; 635; 636; 637; 638; 639; 640; 641; 642; 643; 644; 645; 646; 647; 648; 649; 650; 651; 652; 653; 654; 655; 656; 657; 658; 659; 660; 661; 662; 663; 664; 665; 666; 667; 668; 669; 670; 671; 672; 673; 674; 675; 676; 677; 678; 679; 680; 681; 682; 683; 684; 685; 686; 687; 688; 689; 690; 691; 692; 693; 694; 695; 696; 697; 698; 699; 700; 701; 702; 703; 704; 705; 706; 707; 708; 709; 710; 711; 712; 713; 714; 715; 716; 717; 718; 719; 720; 721; 722; 723; 724; 725; 726; 727; 728; 729; 730; 731; 732; 733; 734; 735; 736; 737; 738; 739; 740; 741; 742; 743; 744; 745; 746; 747; 748; 749; 750; 751; 752; 753; 754; 755; 756; 757; 758; 759; 760; 761; 762; 763; 764; 765; 766; 767; 768; 769; 770; 771; 772; 773; 774; 775; 776; 777; 778; 779; 780; 781; 782; 783; 784; 785; 786; 787; 788; 789; 790; 791; 792; 793; 794; 795; 796; 797; 798; 799; 800; 801; 802; 803; 804; 805; 806; 807; 808; 809; 810; 811; 812; 813; 814; 815; 816; 817; 818; 819; 820; 821; 822; 823; 824; 825; 826; 827; 828; 829; 830; 831; 832; 833; 834; 835; 836; 837; 838; 839; 840; 841; 842; 843; 844; 845; 846; 847; 848; 849; 850; 851; 852; 853; 854; 855; 856; 857; 858; 859; 860; 861; 862; 863; 864; 865; 866; 867; 868; 869; 870; 871; 872; 873; 874; 875; 876; 877; 878; 879; 880; 881; 882; 883; 884; 885; 886; 887; 888; 889; 890; 891; 892; 893; 894; 895; 896; 897; 898; 899; 900; 901; 902; 903; 904; 905; 906; 907; 908; 909; 910; 911; 912; 913; 914; 915; 916; 917; 918; 919; 920; 921; 922; 923; 924; 925; 926; 927; 928; 929; 930; 931; 932; 933; 934; 935; 936; 937; 938; 939; 940; 941; 942; 943; 944; 945; 946; 947; 948; 949; 950; 951; 952; 953; 954; 955; 956; 957; 958; 959; 960; 961; 962; 963; 964; 965; 966; 967; 968; 969; 970; 971; 972; 973; 974; 975; 976; 977; 978; 979; 980; 981; 982; 983; 984; 985; 986; 987; 988; 989; 990; 991; 992; 993; 994; 995; 996; 997; 998; 999; 1000.

The imposing figure of Christ, who addresses Lazarus by outstretching his hand, dominates the composition. Behind him are the Apostles Peter and Andrew, who converse in front of a mountain on the far left of the work. On the right, Lazarus appears, risen from the dead, in the open door of the monument, swathed in bandages, which a young Jew tries to unwind. At the back, three onlookers follow the scene. Lazarus's two sisters, Martha and Mary, kneel on the ground and beseech the Lord. The red ground and the absence of landscape make the icon particularly striking. Christ and Lazarus each have a blue halo. There is considerable damage to the lower part of the icon.

Common stylistic traits, the same dimensions and the vivid red of the ground are found in two other icons, *The Transfiguration* in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Chatzidakis 1964–65, pp. 386, 388) and *The Last Supper* in the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos (Tsigaridas 1996, p. 362). All three icons are the work of the same painter and come from Mount Athos. Originally they decorated the epistyle of a templon screen and must have formed part of a series of the twelve main festival scenes of the church. This is one of the earliest surviving examples of such a beam, now cut into separate pieces.

The composition is limited to the essential figures. The monumental character of the work and its style fits a dating in the twelfth century.

KALLIOPI-PHAIIRA KALAFATI

## 216

### Epistyle fragment with the Transfiguration of Christ

Mount Athos, first half of the twelfth century  
Chestnut wood, gesso and tempera, 23.2 × 23.7 × 2.5 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. 12  
PROVENANCE: the cell of St Prokopios in Monastery of Vatopedi, Mount Athos; brought from Mount Athos by Peter Sevast'yanov, 1860; Museum of Old Russian Art at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, St Petersburg, 1861–96; State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, 1898–1919; transferred to the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg  
SELECTED REFERENCES: St Petersburg and London 2000, no. B46, pp. 102–4 with full bibliography; V. Parnitsky; Parnitsky 2004, pp. 298, 299, 301; Enghelof 2005, no. 13, pp. 581–2; Helander 2006, no. 1, pp. 161–2; V. Parnitsky; Parnitsky 2006, p. 30; Tsigaridas 2006, p. 30

The Gospel scene of the Transfiguration is here treated in the same way as in several other Middle Byzantine works, and is particularly close to the mid-twelfth-century mosaic version in the Cappella Palatina, Palermo. The composition is calm and simple. The use of blue haloes is found also in manuscript painting and cloisonné enamels.

Originally this icon was not a separate panel but formed part of a wide epistyle beam with the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church which belonged to the screen of a church on Mount Athos. It was taken to Russia in 1860. Three other icons from this same epistyle are now found in various places. *The Raising of Lazarus* (cat. 215) is in the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, and two others, *The Last Supper* and *The Nativity of Christ*, remain in the Monastery of Vatopedi, Mount Athos. All four have been sawn from the same board and are of approximately the same size. The fairly rare red background, certain similarities in the portrayal of Christ and the saints, and the consistent style and technique all testify beyond doubt that the same artist painted these icons and that they originally formed a single ensemble.

Although this epistyle was evidently made on Mount Athos, as is indicated by the use of chestnut wood, it is the product of an artist who clearly had knowledge of the most current ideas in

Constantinople. The epistyle is agreed to be of the twelfth century, and the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, catalogues it as belonging to the first half.

YURI A. PYATNITSKY

## 217

### Incense burner

Serbia, Janjevo, fourteenth century  
Bronze, casting, openwork, 11 × 12.5 × 3.05 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 161  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Radonjic 1977, London 1981, no. 43; Milovanović 1983, no. 310; Paris 1983, no. 55; Helander 2006, no. 53

Incense burners fall into three main categories: free-standing, hand-held or chain-mounted. This example consists of a large decorated handle and an attached circular thurible or censer (to which bells, now lost, would originally have been attached). Its openings are in the form of keyholes or circles and it has a simple Greek cross on the top. The handle is decorated with a Tree of Life in openwork. It has five stylised lilies and two pairs of pecking birds facing each other; in the centre there is a heart-shaped ornament consisting of floral shoots with a large trefoil lily which might be interpreted as the Tree of Life.

Incense burners were used in churches and in the home. Unique to Serbia was a ceremony – *slava* – in which frankincense was used. This type of incense burner with a handle is documented on Mount Athos and was used there during the silent prayers of monks, during vigils and midnight services when a priest or deacon would incense the worshippers and icons and walk around the temple almost in silence. The container could also be shaken during festivals to enhance the joyful atmosphere of the church with bells and incense.

This incense burner was probably manufactured in one of the Serbian mining centres where large workshops operated. It was found in Janjevo, an important Serbian medieval town. Two similar incense burners are known, one found at Prilep with a Tree of Life in the centre and with birds and dolphins next to it, and another at Mista decorated with lilies. The decoration of the three incense boxes symbolically represents the Eucharist, with birds receiving Communion from the Tree of Life.

DUŠAN MILOVANOVIC

## 218

### Brass lamp

Eastern Mediterranean (?), fifth–sixth century  
Brass, 27 × 7.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, no. 1897.0544.1  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1904, no. 391, pl. XXX; Bailey 1996, no. 2385, pl. 90

This brass lamp contains a central filler-hole and a circular wick-hole with a scalloped rim. The

carinated body is decorated on either side with a monogrammed cross, from the arms of which hang an alpha and an omega. The handle has a double-ribbed collar and flares to a six-sided flower with knobs at its points. The lamp has two suspension lugs and a bayonet-fitting for a stand in its base.

The decorative cross on either side of the body is a form of Christogram, a monogrammatic abbreviation of Christ's name, and symbolic of Christ's triumph. The presence of the alpha and omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, is a direct allusion to Revelations I, 11 – 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last...'. Similar lamps are known from Stobi in Macedonia, the north Pontic area and Syria (Bailey 1996, p. 79).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 219

### Oil lamp

Egypt, sixth century  
Quaternary alloy, cast in parts, covered with green patina, 32.1 × 25.5 × 19.3 cm

Banks Museum, Athens, inv. no. 15109  
PROVENANCE: Egypt  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Branch 1982, no. B7 (J. Branch, Delosvros and Tzoupanou 1997, no. 314; Xanthopoulou 1997, vol. 1, p. 41, vol. 2, p. 185, no. 4A 15.109)

This lamp stands on a high ring base decorated with pierced-work rinceaux. There is no socket for a lamp-stand nor hoops for affixing hanging chains. The body is long, with a ridge around the edge on the sides. The flat upper surface is decorated in low relief with a vine plant growing from a vessel. The wick-hole is circular with two small protuberances close to the lower end of the nozzle. The circular filling hole originally had a swivel lid, of which only the double attachment loops are preserved.

All that remains of the reflector is the lower part, a metal strip with a single row of five pearls. Attached to the upper part is a clumsily cut piece of metal, on which was nailed at a later phase a large cross of Maltese type, which now functions as the reflector of the lamp. It bears the dotted inscriptions: ΩΑΙΩΣ ΑΠΑ ΓΕΡΑΝΝΟΣ (St Apa Gerannos) and ΑΙΤΙΟΣ ΙΩΣΥΠΙΩΣ (St Iosepos the Elder). From the lower end of the cross projects a metal sheet, which recalls processional crosses. This was possibly its original purpose (Xanthopoulou 1997, vol. 2, p. 185).

Both the pearls visible on the surviving part of the original reflector and the decoration of the foot of the lamp with pierced-work rinceaux are recurrent traits of Egyptian copper working in the fifth and sixth centuries. A bowl with a foot bearing comparable pierced-work decoration was found in grave 137 at Ballana, which has been dated to AD 440–50 (Torok 1988, pl. 86). A similar body with a pierced-work foot is encountered on a

lamp of Egyptian provenance in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg; its reflector is decorated with a vine (Moscow 1977, vol. 1, pp. 186–7, no. 395).

ANASTASIA DRANDARI

## 220

### Brass lamp with griffin's head handle

Italy (?), fifth–sixth century AD  
Brass, height 15.9 cm; width 7.2 cm; length 21.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, no. 1897.0544.1  
PROVENANCE: said to have come from Heracleum, Italy; ex L. Mors Collection; gift of Miss Susan Stanley, 1897  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1904, no. 392; Bailey 1996, no. 2385, pl. 90

This brass lamp contains a filler-hole with a baluster lid in the centre, and a wick-hole with scalloped rim at one end. The handle is in the form of a griffin's head holding a spherical object in its beak. On top of the griffin's head is a monogrammed cross surmounted by a dove. The lamp has two suspension lugs and a bayonet-fitting for a stand in its base.

The lamp, whether of clay, metal or glass, was the standard lighting device for houses in the Early Byzantine period. While glass lamps tended to be suspended in multiple lamp-holders known as polycandela, those of metal were either hung singly from integral suspension chains or, as with this example, placed on a lamp-stand. The distribution pattern of find-spots for griffin lamps suggests a place of manufacture somewhere in Italy, possibly Rome. Examples are known from there, Maddaloni, Caltagirone and Porto, and also from Syracuse and Benevento in Sicily (Bailey 1996, p. 78). By contrast, only two examples are known from the eastern half of the empire: one, tentatively attributed to Constantinople and its vicinity, is in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 1962, no. 30, pp. 31–2, pl. xxv), the other, in Berlin, is simply described as having been found in Turkey (Schlunk 1939, no. 146, p. 52, pl. XLVI).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

## 221

### Roundel with the Mother of God

1078–81 (?), Constantinople  
Serpentine, diameter 17.5 cm

Journal: around the edge α ΘΕΟΤΟΚΙΕ (ΘΕΟΓΕΙ ΝΙΚΗΦΩΡΩ ΦΙΛΟΧΡΙΣΤΩ ΔΕΙΧΩΝ ΤΟ ΒΟΤΑΝΕΛΑΘΙ (God-bearer, protect [or help] the Christ-loving master Nikephoros Botaneiates), flanking the Mother of God ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ (Mother of God)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, A.1907  
PROVENANCE: in the Monchy Collection, Lyons, by the seventeenth century; in the Abbey of Hildesheim near Vienna from 1861; acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1907  
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, p. 131; Williamson 1996, pp. 90–1; New York 1997, pp. 79–81

On this serpentine medallion, the Mother of God is shown in bust form, veiled and haloed and identified by an inscription either side of her head.

Her hands are raised before her, palms out. Around the rim is an inscription invoking her help for Emperor Nikephoros III Botaniates. On the reverse is a roughly scratched outline of the bust of the Mother of God and the letter M. The roundel has been broken diagonally across its width, although the Mother of God's face and several letters of the inscription have been lost; it was repaired before it came into the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection.

The iconography, with the frontal position of the Virgin's hands, is also unusual. In representations of the Virgin Orans, the hands and arms are usually out to the sides. However, this representation is comparable with both eleventh-century seals and with the image in the north-west dome of the Panagia Kosmosoteira in Pherrai, Greece.

The roundel can be dated by the inscription to the reign of Emperor Nikephoros Botaniates. However, the wording is unusual in combining *filochristo* (Christ-loving), a common imperial title, with the word *despotes* (lord), which was not adopted as an imperial title until the twelfth century. Potentially, therefore, the roundel may predate Nikephoros's elevation. It is, however, one of very few hardstone carvings that can be dated and is thus important in relation to late eleventh-century Byzantine sculpture. It is conceivable that the roundel might be a slice from a serpentine column. The material itself was highly valued and may have had apotropaic powers. The carving is heavy, but there are similarities with relief panels from the Peribleptos monastery, perhaps founded by Nikephoros and where he was buried. The medallion's function is unknown: it is too large and heavy to have been worn as an amulet. It may have been set above a door or inlaid into church furnishings or perhaps have formed part of the tomb of Nikephoros.

LIZ JAMES

## 222

### Mosaic with head of Christ

Ravenna, 545  
Detached apse mosaic, restored in the nineteenth century, 53.5 × 38 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, A.1910.1056  
PROVENANCE: from San Michele in Africeno, Ravenna  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Anderson-Treadgold 1995, Ellenberg 1996, no. 47, pp. 207–31; London 1994, no. 75, pp. 80–1 (R. Cormack)

Only a few parts of the face are original – the gold background and the blue tunic and mantle are nineteenth-century restorations. On the face the flesh parts, in a mixture of stone and glass tesserae, are mostly original, but the eyes and nose are reworked and the mouth too is partly remade. The hair is mostly original. As with other early mosaics in Ravenna, the surface of the mosaic had deteriorated in the nineteenth century, and was repaired partly by the addition of new tesserae,



and partly by the reuse of salvaged sixth-century tesserae.

It was shown by Andreescu-Treadgold (1990) that this mosaic is the head of Christ from the apse of the church of San Michele in Affricisco, Ravenna, which was dedicated on 7 May 545. A watercolour made by E. Pazzi in 1843 (Ellenberger 1992, fig.66) shows that the apse contained a standing figure of a young Christ with a cross halo between two Archangels. On the wall above the apse was an enthroned seated Christ between archangels holding the instruments of the Passion and by seven angels of the Apocalypse blowing their trumpets. On each side of the apse were standing figures of SS. Kosmas and Damianos.

This fragment was purchased in Italy in 1856, and thought wrongly to have come from a small church in Milan. The apse mosaics of San Michele were taken down and sold in 1844. They were supposedly sent to Berlin. The consignment is now in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, but it consists of fake substitutes and not the originals. The only surviving originals are this head of Christ, and the heads of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel at Torcello and of an angel at St Petersburg. Clearly the apse mosaic was in very poor condition in the nineteenth century.

Originally this head was probably very similar to the young Christ in Paradise in the apse of San Vitale, Ravenna, dedicated in 548.

ROBIN CORMACK

## 223

### Four Gospels, folio 112

Constantinople, mid-twelfth century  
Parchment, 17.5 × 12.3 cm, 1+275 folios

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, 250 (7532).  
Content: Four Gospels (13–275) with Eusebius' letter to Carpianus (1r–20), chapter lists to each Gospel.  
PROVENANCE: gift of Russian Bazarine Beccardi, 1794.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Friend 1992, p. 145, fig. 144–5; Carr 1991, pp. 667–8; fig. 4; Ševčenko mosaic, p. 336.

This manuscript exemplifies the exuberantly decorated small Gospel-books popular in the twelfth century, surely for private use. First, like the manuscripts of the Kokkinobaphos group, it embeds the traditional pairing of Evangelist portrait and feast icon at the opening of each Gospel in an extravagant surround of ornament, both architectural and vegetal. As in the Codex Eberhardianus (cat. 204), also from the mid-twelfth century, feast scene and author portrait are integrated here in a single, richly framed composition that faces a large ornamental headpiece, producing a fanfare of ornament that spans the full opening of the book at the beginning of each Gospel.

Second, it displays Gospel frontispieces. The traditional, static Majestas Domini surrounded by

the four Beasts and four Evangelists is replaced by two dynamic, full-page images, one of revelation as the prophets Elijah and Ezekiel proclaim their visions of God, presented here as the youthful Christ Emmanuel, the 'God with us' of his incarnation and eschatological return; the other of transmission as Christ confronts the four Evangelists. The images invite the reader to 'see' the revelation of the Word as it takes flesh in the parchment of the book.

Third, the canon tables are populated by animals, acrobats and allegories, including the labours of the months and personifications of eighteen virtues. The allegories draw upon longstanding traditions in monastic illumination, but twelfth-century imperial iconography adopts the virtues, too (see cat. 59). Ševčenko has pointed out the many imperial virtues included in this series, found also in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, ms 1, and suggested their invention for an imperial patron. Such an intersection of monastic and imperial imagery reflects the mid-twelfth-century book trade, in which scribes and painters worked for both lay and monastic dignitaries.

ANNEMARIE WEYL CARR

## 6 Icons

### 224

#### Micromosaic icon with St Theodore

Constantinople, early fourteenth century  
Wood, tesserae of marble, jasper, lapis lazuli, stone and gilded copper, wax, resin, 9 × 7.4 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. 29.  
PROVENANCE: probably gift of Cardinal Beccardus to St Peter's, Rome, before 1498. Museo Sacro, Vatican, De Sidonia Collection, Paris, before 1865; collection of Alexander Baidulsky, Paris, after 1865; bought with the Baidulsky Collection by the Russian Tsar Alexander III for the Imperial Hermitage Museum, 1884, and transferred to the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, January 1885.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: St Petersburg and London 2000, no. B-102, pp. 143–6 with full bibliography (Y. Piatnitsky); New York 2004, no. 195, p. 209 (Y. Piatnitsky); Piatnitsky 2001, pp. 308, 319; Piatnitsky 2006a, pp. 11–21.

This image of the holy warrior St Theodore Stratelates was produced using tiny tesserae of semi-precious stones, such as lapis lazuli and jasper, with marble for the face and gilded copper for the background and details of the garments and armour. The wooden base was hollowed out and filled with a wax coating, over which the artist executed an under-painting and then inlaid the mosaic. He added separate details using wax-based paints.

The miniature technique and the refined style of this icon place it among Byzantine micromosaics of the highest artistic quality. It is no doubt the product of the Constantinopolitan court workshops, as Byzantine portable mosaics seem to have been distinctive insignia of imperial power and to have belonged exclusively to the emperors and members of their families.

In almost all literature on the subject, the Hermitage icon is dated no later than the first half of the fourteenth century, but it is most likely from the first quarter. A group of micromosaics with inscriptions composed of metallic plates on a lapis lazuli ground and a checked border share these distinctive features with the Hermitage icon: among them are the Annunciation in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the diptych in Florence (cat. 227) and the St John the Baptist icons in Venice and the Hermitage, St Petersburg. These pieces were surely produced in Constantinople in the first quarter of the fourteenth century and their style is consistent with monuments of Palaiologan art such as the mosaics in the Church of the Virgin Pammakaristos in Constantinople, which dates from the first decade of the fourteenth century. The group probably all came from the same workshop.

YURI A. PIATNITSKY

### 225

#### Micromosaic with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, 1150–75  
Mosaic on wood, 54 × 41 cm

Seppontendenz speciale per il Polo Museale Fiorentino, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, inv. no. 3.  
PROVENANCE: from Lorenzo il Magnifico's private collection, later in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Furlan 1979, pp. 33–5, note 11 (with earlier literature); Kockelberg-Patz 1982, pp. 21, 66, 73–74, 77–78, 84, 91, 103, 108, 110, 116, 126, 130–1; Demus 1991, pp. 34–8; Florence 1992, no. 117, pp. 152–4; Popova 2005, p. 57.

This is one of the earliest and best examples of micromosaics, made of diminutive bronze, marble and lapis lazuli tesserae of 0.5 to 1 cm. Similar-sized tesserae are found in the micromosaic of the Transfiguration in the Louvre (New York 1997, no. 77, pp. 130–1 [A. Weyl Carr]), which also displays the same cross motifs in the ornamental border. Though analogous, on compositional grounds, to the roughly contemporary image of Christ in Berlin (Demus 1991, no. 5, pp. 29–33), it is characterised by a much more evident decorative approach. The meander and zigzag motif in the halo is clearly intended to simulate the sumptuousness associated with icons made of precious metals and enamels; moreover, the multicoloured polylobe squares enframing the letters IC XC had often been used for golden appliques to icon revetments since the tenth century (see Wessel 1967, nos 10 and 18, pp. 55–6 and 70–3).

Unlike the Louvre icon, in which the dynamic and expressive elements of Byzantine art around the year 1200 can be detected, the Bargello mosaic is characterised by a strongly linear rendering of both folds and physiognomic details, chromatic subtlety and a harmonic construction of the body, which fits with the style of Komnenian art in the second half of the twelfth century.

MICHELE BACCI

### 226

#### Micromosaic with the Transfiguration

Constantinople, around 1200

Tesserae of gilded copper, marble, lapis lazuli and glass, wax; originally on wood, transferred to slate in 1864 and restored (lower part of Christ's body, right hand side of his face) in putty and stucco, 52 × 35 cm

Musee du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, no. 145.  
PROVENANCE: formerly in the collection of Ignazio Pappe, Duke Girolamo, in Palermo in the eighteenth century; acquired in Palermo by Leon Dufour in Palermo in the eighteenth century; acquired by the museum, 1852.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Labarte 1853, no. 109b; Labarte 1864, pl. cxxv; Paris 1991, no. 642; Coche de La Ferrière 1992, no. 74; Athens 1994, no. 169; New York 1970, no. 142; Weisemann 1978, pl. 28; Coche de La Ferrière 1981, p. 179 and doc. 478; Brussels 1990, no. 82; Kockelberg-Patz 1982, pp. 101–3, 108, 110 (with bibliography); Brescia 1992, no. 59; Demus 1991, pp. 45–50, no. 9; Paris 1992, no. 279; Paris 1995, no. 1; New York 1997, no. 77.

There are more than 50 Byzantine micromosaics in existence. Usually small in size, they are distinctive for the technique of their manufacture; they are constructed from minute tesserae (in this case between 0.5 and 1 mm in breadth) made of copper (sometimes silver or gold), glass, marble or stones of various colours, fixed in wax on a wooden support – as was this example from the Louvre in the eighteenth century – transferred onto slate in 1864.

This icon is of great technical virtuosity; it is also one of few to represent a scene from the Gospels, in this case the Transfiguration of Christ with Moses and Elijah at his side and the Apostles Peter, James and John below. One of the greatest in size, it has sometimes been assumed to be from an icon screen, although this is far from certain.

The Louvre Transfiguration is one of the earliest micromosaics. Although we know that it was in Sicily in the eighteenth century, its style is reminiscent of the mosaics of Daphni of around 1100 and it, too, should be attributed to a workshop of Constantinople. The mis-spelling of METAMORFOCIC (Transfiguration) with the inversion of the letters 'O' and 'R' does not necessarily indicate a provincial manufacture. However, the expressive, almost anxious faces of Elijah and Moses, each framed in a shock of shaggy hair, and the vivid play of light and shadow on the drapery has been compared by Otto Demus with the late twelfth-century frescoes in Hosios David in Thessaloniki, justifying a date in the second half of the twelfth century, or around 1200.

JANNIC DURAND

### 227

#### Micromosaic diptych with festival scenes

Constantinople, early fourteenth century  
Mosaic on wood panel with silver-gilt and enamel frame, each panel 27 × 17.7 cm

Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, 09/06/0040–41.  
PROVENANCE: Baptistry of San Giovanni in Florence, Thessaloniki.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bechlerowicz and Brunetti 1976, no. 37, pp. 279–81; Grabar 1976, p. 60; Furlan 1979, pp. 81–2; New York 2004, no. 120, pp. 219–20 (A. Ellenberger).

According to an eighteenth-century tradition, the diptych arrived in Florence in 1394 as a bequest to the Baptistry of San Giovanni from Nicoletta di

Antonio Gironi, the Venetian widow of an official at the Byzantine court of John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–54); in the fifteenth century it was set within a silver frame decorated with enamels. The work displays the twelve Gospel scenes corresponding to the most important feasts of the Byzantine liturgical year (the so-called Dodekaortion). It betrays technical, compositional and stylistic features hinting at an execution in the cultural atmosphere of early fourteenth-century Constantinople. The use of miniaturised tesserae enables the artist to realise an extremely accurate rendering of even small details. Each of the twelve scenes, included within a square of roughly 9 × 9 cm, is set either against an architectural background embellished with classicising elements, or a natural landscape indented with the irregular rock peaks so common in mature Palaiologan painting; the human figures are characterised by diversified poses and animated gestures, and a special emphasis is given to representations in profile. Some details, such as the figure of Adam in the Anastasis, seem to be reminiscent of the vigorous expressiveness betrayed by the Passion cycle of 1312 in the narthex of the *katholikon* in the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, even if its general tone is that of a more serene and balanced rendering of bodies and spaces.

MICHELE BACCI

### 228

#### Micromosaic with the Man of Sorrows

Constantinople, around 1300  
Mosaic tesserae on wood, 13 × 19 cm (without frame); 23 × 28 cm (with frame); 98.7 × 97.1 cm (case open)

Badica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome, inv. no. 19, Fondo Edifici di Culto, amministrato dal Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale per l'Amministrazione del Fondo Edifici di Culto.  
PROVENANCE: in the Badica since 1381–86.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bertelli 1969; New York 2004, no. 191, pp. 231–2 (H. C. Evans).

At the centre of this Italian Renaissance case (dating from the late fourteenth century with later additions) which contains the relics of many saints (wrapped in silk and labelled with their names) is a Byzantine micromosaic in an added silver frame. The subject is the Man of Sorrows (or 'Utmost Humiliation'), the Good Friday image developed in Byzantium in the twelfth century for Easter rituals (see cat. 246). Christ is dead and shows the cut in his chest and his wounded hands (the stigmata). On the cross piece above Christ's head is written in Greek 'King of Glory' (O BACIAEYC THC AOETHC), and on each side of the cross nimbus the abbreviation Jesus Christ (IC XC) appears. The image might have been used in the Good Friday liturgy or as a devotional icon (in some Byzantine paintings of death scenes of monks, a panel with this iconography is seen placed on the corpse).

On the back of the micromosaic is a painting of St Catherine (HATHIAAIKATEPINH), part

Western, part Byzantine in style. This has led to the suggestion that the micromosaic was removed from the Monastery of St Catherine's at Sinai around 1380. Coats of arms of the family of Raimondelli Orsini del Balzo, from 1386 Count of Lecce, are on the enamels in the added silver frame. He went on pilgrimage to Sinai from 1380 to 1381, and claimed to have given a finger of St Catherine and another micromosaic to the church of St Catherine at Galatina. He probably gave this icon to the church of Santa Croce in 1385 or 1386 (it was then Carthusian, and is now Cistercian), near the Basilica of St John Lateran. It was there encased in the present frame with the inscription: FUIT S GREGORI MAGNI PAPAE, implying that the micromosaic was identified as a work of the vision of Christ by Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), who had found a disbeliever in his congregation and prayed for a sign from God and was rewarded by the appearance of the crucified Christ above the altar. This icon in its relics display case became a famous image of veneration by pilgrims to Rome – to see it they had to descend through a dark passage into a subterranean chapel known as the 'chapel Jerusalem', whose pavement was laid on earth brought from Golgotha. Only the Pope could say Mass in this chapel.

ROBIN CORMACK

### 229.1, 229.2

#### Pair of icons with the Annunciation

Constantinople, eleventh–late thirteenth century  
Egg tempera, gold and enamel on wood, with silver gilt revetment, both panels 131 × 67.5 cm

Icon Gallery, Oxford, inv. nos 79 and 82.  
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Prodromos, Oxford.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kunkovskii 1969, pp. 48–50, 1, 20–21; Balabanov 1995, pp. 180–2; nos 2–3; Georgievski 1999, pp. 2–3, no. 4; Paris 1999, nos 12 and 13; Rome 1999, nos 12 and 13; Pallas 2001, nos 27 and 28.

This monumental Annunciation is painted on two separate panels, with the Archangel Gabriel to the left and the seated Virgin to the right. Gabriel moves gently towards the Virgin, and raises his right hand in a gesture of greeting. Mary's head is tilted towards the Archangel, but she looks out towards the viewer and is occupied in spinning with a distaff. This alludes to the legend of the Virgin's upbringing in the Temple at Jerusalem where she would spin and weave the priests' vestments.

The icons are distinctive for their rich palette and well-modelled figure style, but there is some repainting. They also have expensive silver revetments (with some losses); stamped on that of the Virgin is the Greek inscription O KYPIOC META COY (the Lord is with you), and on enamels in quadrilobe plaques the Greek sigla, Mother of God. Also in enamel, below these sigla, is a donor's inscription: TA CA IPOCATΩCOI KOPH IANATHA. AEQN COC OIKTPOC OIKETHC Θ(EO)Y ΘYTHC ('I give you what belongs to you, All Holy Virgin Mary. Leo, your pitiable servant,



priest of God'). The silver plates have floral ornamentation and relief figures. On the Gabriel panel are figures of archangels (the inscription naming Gabriel is lost); on the Virgin panel, the revetment is of the same decorative type; along the top are medallions with Christ, the Virgin and St John the Baptist (the Deisis) and with the Virgin's parents, Joachim and Anna. The medallions at the bottom are SS. Andrew and Blasios. At the sides are ten plaques with standing figures of prophets: Samuel, David, Daniel and Zechariah can be recognised among them. The metal halo of the Virgin is of a different style and probably later than the revetment, as are the two semi-precious stones on her maphorion.

These panels have been the subject of much research and controversy. When they were first studied in 1900 they were fixed in the iconostasis of the late thirteenth-century church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid. They were dated to the eleventh or twelfth century, and the priest Leo was identified as an archbishop of Ohrid, either Leo I, Archbishop of Ohrid (1037–56), or Leo II Mung (1108–20). It is certainly more likely that they were intended to be fixed, not to an iconostasis, but on the arches on each side of the sanctuary of some as yet unidentified church. This was a common position for the placing of the Annunciation in Byzantine churches, usually painted in fresco. This dating implies that the silver revetments were added later, and there are some indications that the painting is earlier than the plates. However, Grabar, who dated the revetments to the late thirteenth century, argued that the panels were all of this date. This would mean that the priest Leo is unknown, and perhaps later still.

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

## 230

Two-sided icon with the Virgin Psychostria (front) and the Annunciation (back)

Constantinople, early fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver-gilt revetment with enamel, 93 × 68 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 10  
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Juhanković and Čorović-Juhanković 1959, pp. 122–5; New York 2004, no. 199

This large two-sided icon was made for the veneration of the Virgin Psychostria (She who saves souls) and also to function as a processional icon, presumably on the festival of the Annunciation on 25 March (7 April, according to the Orthodox calendar). On the silver-gilt revetment are the inscriptions on the front in the roundels, M(HTH)PΘ(EO)Y (Mother of God) and I(HCOY)C X(PICTO)C (Jesus Christ); in the rectangular plaques, HΨYXOC(CT)PIA (Saviour of Souls); and on the back in red letters on the gold ground reverse, O XAIPETICMOC (The Annunciation), O APX(ATTEAOC) FABPIHA

(The Archangel Gabriel) and M(HTH)PΘ(EO)Y (Mother of God). The dry style, the bulky forms of the garments of the Archangel Gabriel, the inverted perspective of the architecture and the miniature and playful caryatids on the columns behind the Virgin are all features associated with the art of Constantinople in the early fourteenth century.

The front of the icon celebrates the Virgin Psychostria but she is represented in the form of the Hodegetria. This icon is therefore a copy of the famous model in Constantinople believed to be painted by St Luke and which was venerated as an icon that could perform miracles. Copies of this icon were also believed capable of carrying out miraculous healings of the faithful. The Virgin and Child, protected by two angels, are framed within an ornamental silver-gilt revetment. This includes cast plaques of Christ in the centre at the top and also busts of the prophets Aaron, Gideon, Ezekiel, Daniel and Habakkuk, Jacob and St John Chrysostom.

The stylistic clues to a production in Constantinople, together with its current provenance in Ohrid, fit neatly with some archival documents about the history of the monastery of the Virgin Psychostria in Constantinople. The Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328) made a gift of this monastery to Gregory I, Archbishop of Ohrid, who erected the exonarthex of the cathedral of St Sophia in that city in 1313. Very probably the icon was sent on this occasion from Constantinople to Ohrid.

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

## 231

Icon with Christ

Thessaloniki or Ohrid, middle of fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver gilt revetment, 157.5 × 125 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 8  
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov 1909, p. 249; New York 2004, no. 194

Christ is depicted half-length. He holds an open Gospel in his left hand while giving a benediction with his right. His expression is one of contemplation and seriousness; his eyes are slightly turned to the right. His cruciform nimbus and the ground of the icon under the revetment is in gold. The text on the Gospel-book in Greek reads: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.' This passage (John xxvi, 8) was spoken by Christ at the winter festival of Hanukkah when he was nearly stoned by the Jews in the Temple at the porch of Solomon. In this chapter he sets out his role as the Good Shepherd and protector of the faithful.

Christ is enclosed by a silver-gilt revetment. It is surprising to find that it has been constructed

out of a series of irregular decorated plates which look as though they were mass-produced and then adapted to fit. Besides the floral ornamentation on the plates, there are figural reliefs of saints (George, Demetrios, St Clement of Ohrid, and standing angels) as well as some festival scenes and the Eumasia (the empty throne ready for the Last Judgement). Some of these images are repeated, again indicating the use of mass-produced plates.

The inscription on the bottom frame seems to have come from a different icon. It reads in Greek: YMNON EPINIKON ΩCΘ(E)ΩΦEPEI AYTOC A'ENYAOC K(AI) XOIKOC TYTXANΩN ΔOYKAC ICAAK(I)OC CEBACTOKPATΩP IAACTH EIKONA XPYCOY APΓYPOY TE TEXNOYPTHMEN(HN) HN K(AI) ΔEXOIO ΠAMMEΔON Θ(EO)Y (KPATOC) (JIC) EEIACMA TΩN AMAPT(H)MA(TON). This states that the gold and silver icon is offered to God for the redemption of the sins of sebastokrator Isaakios Doukas. It has been suggested that this man was the commander of the cavalry of the Serbian Tsar Dušan and governor of Ohrid in the fourteenth century.

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

## 232

Icon with the Virgin Psychostria

Thessaloniki or Ohrid, middle of fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver gilt revetment, 158 × 122 × 4 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 8  
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov 1909, p. 249; New York 2004, no. 193

This icon is a pendant to the icon with Christ and, judging by their almost identical size, style and treatment, they were most likely both made in the same workshop, probably by the same artist. Their scale and lavish decoration suggests they were made to be prominent in a church, probably as intercolumnar icons in an iconostasis, and it has been suggested that this was in the Church of St Sophia at Ohrid, the cathedral of the city since the eleventh century. The Virgin is inscribed in two roundels, as M(HTH)PΘ(EO)Y (Mother of God); and in the rectangular plaques as HΨYXOC(CT)PIA, 'She who saves souls'. The term Psychostria is found as an appellation of Mary on a number of icons, and there was a monastery of the Virgin Psychostria at Constantinople. Mary in this icon is turning to the right, presumably towards the icon of Christ. She holds the Child, wriggling in her arms, and looks out towards the viewer.

The Virgin and Christ have gold haloes, and are framed within a silver-gilt revetment with a geometric pattern of interlacing circles. On the frame of the icon are floral ornaments and figural reliefs. The busts of St John the Baptist and the Virgin, and the archangels Michael and Gabriel are on the top frame. Christ is missing at the

centre and has been replaced with a figure of the Virgin Episkepsis. Along the sides are busts of the prophets Moses, Aaron, Zechariah, Isaiah, and Habakkuk. Also represented is Nicholas, Archbishop of Ohrid.

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

## 233

Icon with the Baptism of Christ

Ohrid, early fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44.5 × 36 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 5  
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Juhanković and Čorović-Juhanković 1959, pp. 122–5; New York 2004, no. 21

The title of this work, H BAPT(TH)CIC (Baptism), is written in Greek in red letters at the top. St John the Baptist stands on the rocky bank of the River Jordan to the left and is inscribed O A(TOC) IO(ANNHC) O (ΠPOΔPOM)OC (St John the Forerunner). Christ has a cruciform nimbus and is inscribed I(HCOY)C X(PICTO)C (Jesus Christ).

The standard Byzantine elements of the scene are found, though the four spectators on the right bank are all angels: the Holy Spirit is coming down from heaven in the form of a dove. Beside the Baptist is a small bush and his axe (referring to John's statement that every tree that does not bear fruit will be cut down). Christ is dressed in a loincloth as he is baptised. In the waters of the Jordan, on the left there is a personification of the river as an old man with an urn, and on the right a dragon.

The scene is painted with great gusto; the Baptist towers above Christ and the rocky landscape climbs towards heaven. On the back of the icon is a painted cross. It was very likely produced as one of a set of festival icons to adorn the same sanctuary screen as the Doubting of Thomas and the Anastasis (cats 234, 235).

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

## 234

Icon with the Anastasis

Ohrid, early fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44 × 36.5 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 5  
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Juhanković and Čorović-Juhanković 1959, pp. 122–5; New York 2004, no. 22

In the upper part of the icon there are remnants of the red letters of an inscription: H[ANACTA]CIC (the Resurrection). The Anastasis is one of the two regular representations of the Resurrection in the Orthodox church. Christ is seen in glory, breaking down the gates of Hell, and then ascending to Heaven and taking with him the most famous Old Testament figures. In this icon Christ sweeps down diagonally to Hades

in a blaze of light with angels above holding the instruments of the Crucifixion. He rescues Adam from his sarcophagus, while Eve waits behind. Next behind her is Abel with a shepherd's crook (his murder at the hands of his brother Cain made him the first martyr). On the right are kings David and Solomon and behind them St John the Baptist to the right. The scene is set against a mass of craggy rocks, reminiscent of those in the Baptism icon (cat. 233). The broken gates of Hell are beneath the feet of Christ whose divinity is marked by the shining golden rays of the mandorla.

This icon was very likely made to adorn the same sanctuary screen as the Baptism and the Doubting of Thomas (cats 233 and 235).

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

## 235

Icon with the Doubting of Thomas

Ohrid, early fourteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44 × 36 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 7  
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Juhanković and Čorović-Juhanković 1959, pp. 12–13; New York 2004, no. 23

This icon is entitled the Doubting of Thomas although only a few remaining letters of the red inscription are visible in its upper part. The account in the Gospel of St John (xx, 24–9) relates that Thomas was absent when Christ appeared to the other Apostles after the Resurrection and showed them his wounds from the Crucifixion. Thomas refused to believe in the Resurrection unless he had seen the wounds for himself. The icon shows the subsequent appearance of Christ to Thomas. Christ stands in the centre of two groups of five Apostles. He raises his right arm and displays his body. Thomas on the left stretches out his right hand to touch the wound in Christ's right side. The other Apostles show their emotions as Thomas accepts the truth of Christ's return to Jerusalem after death. According to the Gospel the appearance of Christ took place in a house with the doors closed. The reality of the architecture with its arches, columns and capitals is well represented in the icon, with an almost ghostly apparition of Christ to the eleven disciples (lacking Judas Iscariot).

It is probable that this work was made as a festival icon for the same sanctuary screen as the Baptism and the Anastasis (cats 233, 234).

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

## 236

Two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Annunciation

Thessaloniki (?), third quarter of the fourteenth century  
Tempera on wood (canvas), gilding, silver-gilt revetment, 99.5 × 73 × 5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 236  
PROVENANCE: Church of the Virgin Peribleptos, Ohrid, court chapel, Dedop, Belgrade, c. 1930  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Milešić 1938, New York 2004, no. 54, pp. 254–5 (A No. 6)

The Virgin Hodegetria is depicted on the front of the icon, covered by a revetment, and the Annunciation appears on the back. There is an integral raised frame on the front (the lower edge is missing), while the back is flat with a gilded background. The paint layer is abraded and partly missing.

The style of painting, which can be attributed to the third quarter of the fourteenth century, represents a high point in the art of the Palaiologan era. Technique and style indicate that both sides of the icon were the work of the same artist. Some parts of the icon were overpainted in the seventeenth century.

On the revetment, with its decoration of interlaced circles, three medallions have survived. The frame bore busts and figures of Christ, the archangels and the Apostles, of which two busts have survived. The revetment enhanced the icon's function as an object for prayer. Its style and technical details reveal that it dates from the same period as the icon.

SOFIJA KAJTEZ AND ALEKSANDRA SITIC

## 237

ARTIST FROM MORAVIA

Icon with St Demetrios

End of the fourteenth century, or beginning of the fifteenth century, Hilandar (?)  
Tempera on board, 34.3 × 26.5 cm

Museum of Applied Arts, Belgrade, inv. no. 133  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Radović 1960, pp. 46, 48, fig. 10; Durić 1962, pp. 40–1, no. 49; Radović 1964, fig. XII, p. 69; Janj 1964, p. 101; Weinmann et al. 1970, p. 149, fig. 203; Vrdel 1970, no. 23, fig. 12; Paris 1985, p. 199, no. 215, p. 47; Stolić 1988, p. 111; Holmki 2006, no. 1.7

St Demetrios was a popular military saint whose cult was centred from the Early Byzantine period at Thessaloniki, where he became the patron saint of the city and protected it during attacks and sieges. His festival day at Thessaloniki was 26 October, and there was an annual fair there which attracted visitors from around the Mediterranean. By the Late Byzantine period the cult of St Demetrios had spread broadly, and especially into the Balkans and Russia. He was believed to have been martyred in the early fourth century, and a large, still surviving, Church of St Demetrios at Thessaloniki was by the sixth century filled with mosaics representing his miracles of protection and healing, which were also recorded in texts and in sermons delivered in the famous church.

This icon shows St Demetrios armed to the teeth. The standing figure is painted on a concave board; the ground is ochre, imitating gold and his name is written in Greek in red letters. He wears a red tunic, breastplate and armour, and chain-mail trousers. He has a dark-blue cape over his







Both the interior and exterior surfaces of the cover and the compartment of this reliquary are covered in paintings with a gold background; the whole scheme comprises a theological programme based on the Byzantine rite for Holy Week. On the outside of the lid a Crucifixion depicts Jesus on the Cross and conforms to the dictates of canonical tradition: blood flows copiously from Christ's side, the Cross is erected on the skull of Adam at Golgotha and the Sun and the Moon are halted in their course by the event. The only innovations in the composition are the Virgin's mournful embrace of her Son's feet and the demonstrative gesture made by St John, who points to his Gospel. Emotional responses to the Crucifixion are expressed also in Byzantine homilies at this period (as in the homily for Good Friday delivered in c.860 by George of Nicomedia). The figure of St John, Chrysostom, the fourth-century patriarch of Constantinople, holds open a Gospel-book with John XV and XVII: 'The Lord said to his disciples: "This I command you, that you love one another."' The text is used in the church readings for Good Friday, linking the rite, the preaching of the saint and the contents of the casket.

The imagery inside the reliquary celebrates the Resurrection: at the top right the Virgin at prayer turns to her Son, depicted as Pantokrator on the left; lower down, angels in diaphanous robes attend on them as dignitaries at a 'celestial' court; even lower, the inclusion of Peter and Paul alludes to the concord between the Byzantine and Western churches. Stylistic features suggest that a date in the mid-tenth century is appropriate for these images; schism between the two churches did not occur until 1054.

GUIDO CORNICI

## 245

### Reliquary of the True Cross

Constantinople, eleventh century (central plate); Rhine-Meuse, early thirteenth century (mount, reverse and lid) and seventeenth century (corner angles), silver gilt, silver, copper, *champlevé* enamel, gem stones, wood core, velvet, brown varnish (reverse), total height 30 cm (Byzantine plate: 13 × 10 cm)

Musée du Louvre, Paris. Département des Objets d'Art, ex. 1099. provenance: 'Surreal abbey at the Puy de Lège' (Marquet de Vasselot, 1906); formerly collection of M. Vergaenen, Ghent, V. Martin Le Roy, Paris; the gift of V. Martin Le Roy, 1914. SELECTED REFERENCES: Malinva 1866, no. 482; Weale 1866, pp. 90–91; Schlumberger 1867–1905, vol. 5, p. 237; Marquet de Vasselot 1906, vol. 1, pp. 19–21 and pl. 18–19; Elzeviri 1929, p. 29; Borchgrave d'Altena 1931, pp. 312–14; Paris 1931, ex cat. Findow 1961, no. 284; Frolow 1965, pp. 107, 108, 109, 140, fig. 54; Verdier 1980, p. 104, fig. 16; Lapidation-Dessagne 1981, vol. 3, pp. 36–39, fig. 10 (second edition, 1992, p. 186, fig. 5; Paris 1992, no. 237; Toulouse 1997, no. 250; Klein 2004, p. 251; Paris 2005, no. 30.

The reliquary, known as Martin Le Roy, consists of a flat rectangular casket with interior fittings and a sliding lid, the traditional form for a Byzantine reliquary of the True Cross. However, only the embossed silver-gilt plate inside is Byzantine. A small compartment at the centre designed to house the relic is now empty; it originally had a double-cross bar. Mary and St

John, standing at the foot of the cross, and the two angels above it, conform to the iconography of the Byzantine True Cross reliquary, though such a composition was usually reserved for the decoration of the lid, not the interior. The figure and drapery style is characteristic of Constantinople in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and very close to eleventh-century painting, like the Gospels in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, gr. 64, a masterpiece of this style, attributed to the eleventh century.

The wooden core, the framework with alternating panels of filigree and panels of *champlevé* enamel on gilded copper, the reverse decorated with foliage in brown varnish, the lid with a large cross of jewelled filigree on a background of smooth metal, are all work of a Western goldsmith working in the Rhine and Meuse region in the early thirteenth century, in close relationship with such works as the St-Matthias True Cross reliquary in Trier, around 1220, and the famous Hugo d'Oignies' book-binding in Namur, around 1230 (Cologne 1985, n. 41, and Cologne 1972, m. 6/7). It is very likely that the Byzantine plaque is all that remains of a True Cross reliquary brought back from the Fourth Crusade. The fact that this reliquary was designed in imitation of a Byzantine True Cross one, and the care taken to conserve the original central element did give a clear indication of the prestigious origins of the relic in the eyes of its new owners, and must have acted as a guarantee of its authenticity.

JANNIK DURAND

## 246

### Two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Man of Sorrows

Kastoria, last quarter of twelfth century  
Egg tempera on wood, 115 × 77.5 × 3.5 cm

Byzantine Museum, Kastoria  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Chazidakis 1976, pp. 184–5, pl. XXXVII, no. 1; London 1979, no. 8; Balmonte 1981, no. 9; Belting 1992, p. 261–5, fig. 163; New York 1992, no. 72; Athens 1999, no. 10; Athens 2000, no. 8.

This double-sided icon from Kastoria had a specific liturgical use. It was a processional icon made to be used during the Passion service on Good Friday.

The front side has the Virgin and Child in the Hodegetria type. She wears a deep-purple maphorion with folds in a darker shade, and a deep-blue himation, trimmed with two gold braids. The Christ Child, likewise in frontal pose, wears an orange chiton and a greyish brown himation. He holds in his left hand a closed scroll and gives a benediction with his right. In the upper part of the icon, two venerating angels, in bust and in miniature, symmetrically flank the Theotokos. They wear a white chiton and a deep-purple himation. The figures are painted on an ochre-yellow ground which imitates gold, and

they are framed by a red band. Silver haloes are also found in twelfth-century icons from Cyprus.

On the back Christ is shown lifeless and naked, with a cross-inscribed halo, in front of the Cross against a blue ground. Visible above is the inscription: (BAC)IAEYC THC AOZHC (King of Glory) and on the right of the vertical arm of the Cross are the abbreviations: IC XC (Jesus Christ).

Christ as the Man of Sorrows or King of Glory is a new subject, first found in the eleventh century in several media (Pallas 1965, p. 201). This is the earliest example of it in a processional icon. It is a startling and emotional icon for showing Christ both dead and in glory, and so seen at the time between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. This moment is symbolically represented in the Byzantine liturgy, and is here portrayed for display at the annual commemoration of the Crucifixion on Good Friday (Pallas 1965, pp. 197ff and 280–2; Belting 1980–81, p. 5).

Parallels for the Virgin, whose face looks fearful for the future fate of her son, are found in late twelfth-century painting, as in the icon of the Virgin in the Hermitage (Enkleistra) of St Neophytos (c. 1183) in Cyprus (Papageorgiou 1991, pl. 27). Similarly the linear rendering of the hair and the beard of Christ appears in late twelfth-century works, such as Christ from the Lamentation in the Church of the SS. Anargyroi at Kastoria (c. 1180) (Pelekanidis and Chatzidakis 1984, p. 33, pl. 12).

ANGELIKI STRATI

## 247.1–2

### UMBRIAN ARTIST, c. 1250–60

#### Diptych with the Virgin and Child and the Man of Sorrows

Egg tempera and gold on panel, left wing 32.2 × 22.8 cm; right wing 32.4 × 22.8 cm

National Gallery, London, no. 6572 and no. 6573. provenance: left wing, acquired by Adolphe Soclet from the Genoese dealer Genesio, 1906; subsequently in the collection of Madame Fernand Stedlet and of the Fernand Stedlet heirs; acquired by National Gallery, London, 1959; right wing: Rolf Manich, 1969, lot 113 (catalogued as nineteenth century); private collection; acquired by the National Gallery, London, 1999. SELECTED REFERENCES: Van Marle 1929, p. 316; Lion-Goldschmidt 1956, pp. 4–5; Kermer 1967, pp. 55–56; Van Os 1978, pp. 72–3, plate 12, fig. 1; Belting 1990, pp. 21–2, 276; Garrison 1998, no. 267; Cannon 1999, Neff 1999, p. 109, note 46; London 2000, no. 44, pp. 112–13; Avery-Quash; New York 2004, pp. 270–7, fig. 544–5, 605–6, note 94; London 2005a (p. 13) Neff.

This diptych is the earliest surviving Italian example of the Man of Sorrows paired with the Virgin and Child, a combination that became popular in devotional works throughout Western Europe (Panofsky 1927; Kermer 1967; Belting 1990; Ridderbos 1998). The Man of Sorrows panel, formerly in the Stedlet Collection, was initially attributed to Giunta Pisano (Van Marle 1929, p. 316; Lion-Goldschmidt 1956, p. 4) and subsequently to Venice, c. 1300 (Garrison 1949, 1998, no. 267). Following the discovery of the Virgin and Child panel, and the reuniting of the diptych, an association with artists working in North Umbria in the generation after Giunta

Pisano, c. 1250–60, was proposed (Cannon 1999). This mid-thirteenth-century Umbrian connection, and links with Emilia-Romagna, will soon be further explored (Gordon forthcoming).

Recent cleaning has confirmed the high quality and consistency of technique and materials in the two panels. The artist worked confidently, with great fluency, making extensive use of preliminary drawing incised in the gesso ground. This detailed planning may indicate transfer of details from a model. The diptych probably combines elements derived from one or more Byzantine or Byzantine-influenced works rather than following a single prototype. The same pairing appears on the late twelfth-century double-sided icon at Kastoria (cat. 246).

The use of art to stimulate affective piety was favoured among the orders of friars, often employing modified versions of images from the Byzantine repertoire (Van Os 1978; Belting 1990; Derbes and Neff 2004). The diptych was probably produced by an artist with connections to Assisi, the Franciscan headquarters, in a Byzantinising style found in many works – especially crucifixes – made for Franciscan houses in Umbria, Emilia-Romagna and the Marche (Cannon 1999; Cannon 2002, pp. 576–8; Bologna 2000, pp. 186–203). The diptych was well suited to Franciscan concerns: in earlier Byzantine images the forearms of the Man of Sorrows are not visible, but here they are shown crossed, as became common, with hands placed unusually high on the chest, a pose redolent of prayer gestures and the laying-out of the dead, which made visible the wounds recalled in the stigmata of St Francis (although no pigment marking the wound in Christ's side is now visible) (Neff 1999, pp. 87–90). The Virgin's foreknowledge of the future suffering of her child (prolepsis), indicated by her sorrowful expression and gesture, is heightened by the proximity of the dead Christ, towards whom she also gestures and inclines her head. The devotee's close-up view of Christ is made more disturbing by the actions of the hovering bust-length angels, who cover their eyes to avoid the terrible spectacle here openly presented.

JOANNA CANNON

## 248

### FRANCESCO DA PISA (?) (fl. 1298–1301)

#### Deisis with St Catherine of Alexandria and St Sylvester

Second half of thirteenth century  
Tempera and gold on poplar, 87 × 217 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no. 1912. SELECTED REFERENCES: Da Messina 1881, pp. 447–8; Mariani 1886–89, p. 47; Laudford 1889, no. 32; Bellini 1904, pp. 28–3; Sisti 1922, p. 191; Tosca 1927, p. 1037; Garrison 1949, no. 435; Vigni 1956, p. 37; Carl 1958, pp. 42–3; Carl 1974, p. 40; Calce 1978, p. 8; Weitzmann 1982, p. 73; Tardif 1986, pp. 34–7; Carl 1994, pp. 33–35; Carl 1994, p. 20; Burresi and Calce 1999, p. 46; Burresi and Tardif 1999, pp. 33–35; Carl 1994, p. 20; Burresi and Calce 1999, p. 46; Burresi 2003, p. 132; Folda 2005, pp. 143–7; Pao 2005, pp. 82, 202–3; Bockwinz, Labrida, Pace and Tardif 2006, pp. 166, 171.

This panel – probably a dossal or retable placed

behind the altar, and not a 'palio' to judge by its cusped form – is said to have come from the Church of San Silvestro in Pisa. This provenance certainly fits with its iconography, presenting Sylvester on the left side and, on the opposite side, St Catherine, who enjoyed particular popularity in this church. The gradual deterioration of the painting forced Domenico Fiscali, working around 1900, to restore the panel, detaching the painted surface and transferring it onto a metal framework with Gothic arches. Nearly a century later, in about 1990, the painted surface had to be transferred once again to a panel, Fiscali's metal support having rusted and contributed to the flaking of the paint.

These vicissitudes mean that today the sides of the panel are best preserved. Scholars are still debating its authorship, although a possible candidate can be indentified with Francesco da Pisa, who realised – according to Alessio Monciatti – the figure of Christ in the mosaic in the apse of Pisa Cathedral.

Pisan art in the second half of the thirteenth century shows considerable knowledge of Byzantium, thanks to the presence of Pisan merchants in many Eastern cities having, for example, their own quarter in Constantinople. There is evidence that Byzantine artists worked in Pisa, as they also did in Genoa, Venice and other parts of Italy. A similarly shaped panel with an extended Deisis can be found in the collection of the Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai; in this case scholars think that the work was made by a Western ('Veneto-Byzantine') artist to act as an epistyle for a chapel in the monastery used by Latins (Folda 2005).

MARIAGIULIA BURRESI AND LORENZO GARLETTI

## 249

### GIUNTA PISANO (fl. 1236–54)

#### Processional cross with Crucifixion on both sides

Thirteenth century  
Tempera and gold on poplar wood, 113 × 83 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no. 2303. SELECTED REFERENCES: Van Marle 1929, vol. 1, p. 303; Bacci 1934, p. 248; Tosca 1927, p. 1037; Sandberg Vavala 1939, pp. 60–61; Paris 1935, p. 93; Florence 1937, pp. 56–7; Longhi 1948, pp. 7–8; Garrison 1949, no. 371; Carl 1958, pp. 32–8; Bockwinz 1972, p. 324; Carl 1974, pp. 37–8; Tardif 1986, pp. 14–22; Tardif 1994, pp. 18–19, 46–55; Burresi and Calce 1999, p. 36; Carl 1994, pp. 15–16; Burresi and Calce 1999, p. 86; Burresi, Carlen and Geronzi 2003, pp. 30–3; Burresi 2005, pp. 114–15; Pao 2005, p. 154; Testi Cristiani 2004, pp. 17–132; Pisa 2005, pp. 73, 100–1; Bockwinz, Labrida, Pace and Tardif 2006, p. 169.

This is a striking example of Byzantine influence on Western art, with a Crucifixion that dramatically emphasises the dead and sagging body of Christ. This iconography developed first in Byzantium at the beginning of the thirteenth century, with a notable version in a wall painting at Studenica dating from around 1209. In the second half of the century, Cimabue developed this emotional imagery still further. The Italian versions of the Crucifixion differed from the Byzantine ones in having three nails (not four)

to fix the body to the Cross, and emphasising the pain and suffering of Christ.

The double-sided processional cross is a fairly recent discovery. It was in the Church of San Paolo a Ripa d'Arno in the second half of the nineteenth century and after several moves it was deposited in the Museo Civico, Pisa, around 1940. At that time the cross was restored and only afterwards was it possible to detect that the back had been entirely repainted. Before this restoration Peleo Bacci assigned the cross to Giunta Pisano (or Giunta Pisanus Capitini as he signed himself), and this attribution met with broad approval (Tosca, Sandberg, Vavala, Longhi), apart from Garrison, who ascribed it to the Pisan School between 1250 and 1270. Since then, Carl has maintained the attribution to Giunta (comparing it with the signed cross from the Church of San Ranierino, now also in the Museo di San Matteo). Giunta was one of the most influential painters in the first half of the thirteenth century, and he is known to have signed four painted crosses. He was patronised by the Franciscans, and he gained an eminent position among other artists, similar to that later enjoyed by Cimabue and Giotto.

Recently some scholars have disagreed with the traditional attribution: in 1991 Tartufieri ascribed the cross to a follower of Giunta, the so-called Maestro di San Paolo a Ripa d'Arno, and in 2004 Testi Cristiani considered it the work of another pupil of Giunta.

MARIAGIULIA BURRESI AND LORENZO GARLETTI

## 250

#### Triptych with Virgin and Child enthroned with angels and saints

Made in Italy, possibly at Rome, Naples or Siena, between c. 1315 and c. 1340  
Egg tempera with gold on gesso, canvas and wood, painted in red on verso, 39.7 × 27.9 cm (open)

Palazzo Lavery, The Mellon Collection (for National Trust). provenance: bequest of Mrs Ronald Greville to the National Trust with Palazzo Lavery, 1949; date and source of her purchase unknown. On verso in black: A.S., n. 37, 64. SELECTED REFERENCES: National Trust 1924, p. 24, no. 21 (St. J. Gore); London 1934, no. 285, p. 201, pl. 202 (R. Cormack and M. Vassiliou).

This triptych is notable for its combination of Byzantine and Italian styles and iconography. It is similar in this respect to the Sterbini diptych now at Rome, a triptych at Messina, and the Virgin and Child sent to Cambrai from Rome in 1440 (Garrison 1949, cats 65, 70–2, 120, 247; Short 1954, pp. 94, 103; Jääskinen 1971, pp. 149–75; Zeri and Cicala 1992, pp. 55–6; New York 2004, pp. 582–4). Some features and the representations of SS. Kosmas and Damianos, Michael, Nicholas, Anthony Abbot, George, Margaret, Theodosia of Constantinople and Catherine of Alexandria point to a training in the Eastern Mediterranean (Schmidt 2005, fig. 212). But other elements reveal familiarity with Siennese painting. The representation of the Virgin and Child closely



follows that of Duccio's Maestà and small tabernacles made at Siena in its wake (Stubblebine 1979, vol. 2, figs 47, 216, 235, 248, 257–60, 266). One such triptych apparently belonged to Peter of Anjou (brother of King Robert of Naples), who lived at Siena between 1314 and 1315 (Maginnis 2001, p. 148; Schmidt 2005, pp. 242–4). Peter had another brother, Philip, Prince of Taranto, who married Catherine de Valois Courtenay, titular Empress of Constantinople. Perhaps this triptych, with its eastern versions of Margaret, Theodosia and Catherine, was made for this couple (Lock 1995, pp. 66–7, 360–1). This might explain the choice of SS. Francis, Dominic and Louis of Toulouse, the newly canonised brother of Robert, Peter and Philip. The same painter may also have produced the Sterbini diptych, which includes St Lawrence, titular saint of the Franciscan church at Naples, Philip, a popular Angevin saint, and St Louis of Toulouse.

In conclusion, this hybrid triptych was probably made by a Greek painter working in Italy for the Angevin rulers of the Kingdom of Naples (London 1994, p. 206; Kosztolnyik 1996, pp. 239–54; Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, pp. 64–7; L'Europe 2001, pp. 153–235).

REBECCA W. CORRIE

## 251

Icon with the Virgin and Child, Church Feasts and Saints

Venice (?), mid-fourteenth century  
Egg tempera on wood, stucco, gold glass, 42 × 30 × 1 cm

**Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1972**  
**PROVENANCE:** acquired in Athens by Anthony Benakis from the art-dealer Theodore Zoumoulakis, 5 March 1934  
**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Nikiporezou 1976, pp. 1–4, pl. 1–4; Athens 1994, pp. 43, p. 222 (M. Vasiliaki); Babouretti 1994, no. 10, p. 30–31; Athens 2000, no. 73, pp. 418–9 (M. Vasiliaki); Athens 2001, no. 172, pp. 318–30 (M. Vasiliaki); Gordon 2002; Kosztolnyik 2000; Milanou 2002; Vasiliaki 2002; New York 2004, no. 305, pp. 30–6 (M. Vasiliaki); Papantoniou 2005, pp. 267–8, fig. 14

The central panel shows the Virgin Eleousa holding the Christ Child. This is crowned by an arch resting on thin, spiral semi-columns. The spandrels of the arch are covered by two medallions of the Evangelists Luke and Matthew and acanthus leaves at the edges, all of which are made in the gold glass technique (*verre églomisé*). The entire composition is surrounded by a wide frame divided into twenty rectangular compartments, in which ten of the Great Feasts alternate with busts of Apostles.

This icon represents a unique combination of different techniques on a single wooden surface: egg tempera for the central representation of the Virgin and Child and the busts of the Apostles, gold glass for the Evangelists on the spandrels and relief stucco for the Great Feasts. The techniques of gold glass and relief stucco were in use in Italy at the time, while egg tempera is the traditional technique for icon painting.

In this panel iconographic and stylistic features of Late Byzantine painting are combined

with elements drawn from Italian and particularly Venetian art. For example, the rendering of the Virgin's face with its taut skin, almond-shaped eyes, arched eyebrows, her punched halo and some features of her dress are all to be found in fourteenth-century Venetian painting, especially in the work of Paolo Veneziano (Muraro 1979, pp. 116–17, pls 120–1). Technical analysis has shown that the priming of the panel was in the two-layer gesso technique (gesso grosso and gesso sottile) commonly practised in central and north Italy. By contrast, the posture of the Child finds its parallel in an icon of the Virgin and Child in the Philotheou monastery on Mount Athos, dated to the middle of the fourteenth century (Tsigaridas 1992, p. 654, pl. 355) and the iconography of the Great Feasts on the frame is identical with that on the silver revetment of an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria in Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos, dated to the first decades of the fourteenth century (Tsigaridas and Loverdou-Tsigarida 2006, pp. 307–17, figs 234–6, 240–7).

All these elements may suggest that the panel was produced in a Venetian workshop, but by a Byzantine painter, who was better acquainted with Byzantine than with Venetian traditions.

MARIA VASSILAKI

## 252

Icon with Virgin and Child

Mid-thirteenth century  
Tempera and gold on poplar, 80.2 × 59.7 cm

**Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no. 1376**  
**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Maronni 1866–69, p. 48; Lanfredini 1889, no. 509; Sapienza 1891, p. 32; Bellini 1907, p. 60; Garrison 1949, no. 102; Vigi 1950, pp. 40–1; Ragghianti 1955, p. 8; Carl 1976, p. 44; Carl 1978, p. 38; Calce 1978, p. 8; Calce 1986, I, p. 229, II, pp. 533–4; Carl 1994, p. 14; Burresi and Calce 1999, p. 62; Burresi, Carletti and Giannini 2003, pp. 26–30; Burresi 2005, p. 113; Pisa 2005, pp. 28–9, 172–3

This panel entered the Museo Civico, Pisa, in 1861 from the Benedictine monastery of San Matteo. It may be the panel listed by Marianini as a 'Greco-Pisan' painting; Lanfredini uses the same definition, adding that it is in 'very poor condition – panel broken'. This break corresponds today with a vertical gap dividing the icon in two. The figures are painted on a thick panel with a gilded background; the frame projects slightly and is carved from the same wood. At the top are the abbreviations in Greek of 'Mother of God'. On the lower frame traces of the artist's signature remain; this has been variously interpreted and corresponds more or less to: 'M[AGIST]E[R] QUI VOCATUR F[...]. SINELLUS ME PINXIT'. The name of the painter is fragmented by the vertical split, but no possible completion of the name corresponds to any known artist of the time. Perhaps for this reason scholars have sought stylistic links in diverse geographical locations, predominantly around Lucca. Following Garrison, Ragghianti identified stylistic features close to those of the Maestro delle Oblate, active in the first half of the thirteenth century. Carl sees similarities with the

*Madonna di sotto gli Organi* (fig. 41), venerated in Pisa Cathedral and traditionally ascribed to Berlinghiero. The origins of this icon are also difficult to determine because of the strong Byzantine content in the art of Western Tuscany in the thirteenth century. Carl maintains that this icon and the one in the cathedral are both Pisan. The presence of inscriptions in both Latin and Greek seems to confirm these evaluations, placing the present work at a crossroad between Byzantium and the West.

MARIAGIULIA BURRESI AND LORENZO GARLETTI

## 253

GENTILE BELLINI (d. 1507)

*Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità in Prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary*

Venice, 1472–73  
Egg tempera with gold and silver on panel, 102.3 × 37.2 cm

**National Gallery, London, no. 699**  
**PROVENANCE:** Scuola della Carità, Venice; Francis I, Vienna, by 1821; August Lederer, Vienna, by 1925; his wife Serena Lederer (her collection was seized in 1940); Erich Lederer, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, by 1952, inv. no. 910; returned to Erich Lederer's heirs, sold Christie's, London, 12 December 2001 (lot 61); purchased by the National Gallery, 2002  
**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Planché 1988, p. 51; Bettinson 1997, p. 28, pl. CXXIX; Schaffner 1997, pp. 153–7; Valakopoulou 1970, fig. 20, p. 243; Vienna 1975, pp. 19–20, pl. H; Mayer and Capellen 1985, no. A.26, p. 141; Heinenmann 1997, fig. 206, pp. 114–15; Venice 1994, fig. 91, p. 279 and pp. 285, 287–8; Günzburg 2000, fig. 80, pp. 36–8; Welch 2000, fig. 64, pp. 151–4, especially 153; Campbell 2002, no. 5, pp. 14–15; Kenny 2005, p. 108

The painting depicts Cardinal Bessarion in profile, on the left, kneeling in prayer before the Byzantine reliquary of the True Cross (Schioppalalba 1767; Fogolari 1922–23; Erolow 1961, no. 872, pp. 563–5; Venice 1994, pp. 369–78), which he donated to one of the most ancient Venetian confraternities, the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria dei Battuti della Carità. Two brothers wearing the insignia and the habits of the Scuola pray on the right. They have been identified as the Guardian Grande and the Vicario of the Scuola, Ulisse Aliotto and Andrea della Sega, key figures for its acquisition (London 2005A, no. 6, p. 38).

After playing a key role in the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1439) as a leader of the pro-Unionists, Johannes Bessarion (Trebizond, 1399/1400?–Ravenna, 1472), the eminent Greek theologian and scholar of prodigious literary activity, converted to Catholicism and was appointed Cardinal of the title of the Twelve Holy Apostles. Although twice a candidate for the papacy, he made his greatest impact in the West as a scholar with vast philosophical erudition, head of an 'academy' in Rome and systematic manuscript collector.

The reliquary was formally donated to the confraternity on 29 August 1463 to mark the Cardinal's election as a member of the Scuola but actually reached the Scuola in a huge ceremonial procession only in July 1472, the year of Bessarion's death. It was kept attached on a stand of elaborate Venetian-style metalwork, in the confraternity's albergo (meeting-room). Bellini's

painting was commissioned as the door of the tabernacle that housed the precious gift (two keyholes are still visible on the right) and functioned as such until 1744 (Moschini Marconi 1955, no. 216, p. 192). The picture, just like the original half-length portrait of the Cardinal, attributed to Bellini too which decorated the albergo but was stolen in 1540 (Moschini Marconi 1962, no. 347, pp. 200–1), pays tribute to the Venetian rather than the Byzantine history of the reliquary as well as to the individuals associated with it (Cutler 1995A, pp. 257–8).

Bellini, a master in portraiture fascinated with the legend of the True Cross and eastern iconography, depicts Cardinal Bessarion, identified by his bulbous nose and long beard, in black monastic garments of the Orthodox church and the reliquary virtually its actual size. However, the sliding lid, a fourteenth-century Constantinopolitan (?) Crucifixion icon (New York 2004, no. 325, pp. 540–1) with later silver revetments, has not been depicted.

DIMITRI KOTOUOLA

## 254

Wall mosaic with head of an angel

Torcello, second half of eleventh century  
Mosaic, 31.6 × 24.6 cm

**Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, no. 5460**  
**PROVENANCE:** mosaic of the Last Judgment on the west wall of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello, gift of E.-D. Gerspach, 1893  
**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Demus 1944, pp. 43–4; Bellini 1904, p. 325, fig. 382; Andreescu 1972, pp. 198–9; Andreescu 1975, p. 270, fig. 33; Andreescu 1981, pp. 15–18; Paris 1992, no. 144; New York 1997, no. 295; Rome 1997B, no. 297; Andreescu 2004, p. 184; Saint-Denis 2007, no. 63

This fragment, which has undergone almost no repairs, comes from the west wall of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello, in the Venetian lagoon. The wall has a monumental composition of the Last Judgment. This fragment belonged in the third row from the top where, on either side of the Deisis, angels' heads appeared behind the seated Apostles. The two arcs of a circle surviving behind each side of the angel's neck correspond to the haloes of the two Apostles between whose heads the angel emerged. Like a number of other fragments from Torcello, the Louvre head was removed during the restoration of the west wall in the second half of the nineteenth century (Andreescu 1976, 1981, 2004). Some heads were taken down and replaced with copies; the copies were later removed in their turn and replaced by the original if available. But some of the originals, including the Louvre head, were plundered by the mosaic workers who had no compunction in removing some of the copies as well (Andreescu 1972 and 1998).

Andreescu has identified various phases in the Last Judgment mosaics; the first campaign was carried out by a Constantinopolitan workshop in the second half of the eleventh century and the Louvre head belongs to this campaign. Later campaigns were carried out by Italian mosaicists.

This powerful piece possesses the qualities of the finest pieces produced by the workshops of Constantinople in the middle and latter half of the eleventh century, for example the celebrated panel of Constantine IX Monomachus and Zoe in St Sophia, or the mosaics at Daphni (c. 1100) and Hosios Loukas. The technique and the shading of the colours are similar to those used on the angel of the Annunciation on the triumphal arch in St Sophia, Kiev, a building begun in 1037 with mosaics by Byzantine artists of the middle or second half of the eleventh century. The angel of Kiev and the angel of Torcello are almost contemporary; they illustrate the wide geographical area covered by the workshops of Constantinople.

JANNIE DURAND

## 255

Wall painting with St Catherine

1233–34  
Detached fresco, 211 × 97 × 7 cm

**The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, inv. 1907**  
**PROVENANCE:** Atrium, Chapel of St Nicholas in the Cave Monastery, Perelli  
**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Mouriki 1973–74, pp. 79–119 (with earlier bibliography); Athens 1986, no. 31, p. 43 (E. Kononopoulou-Mandessou); Florence 1986, no. 19, pp. 41–50 (E. Kononopoulou-Mandessou); Papagregoriou 1987, pp. 193–202; Chatzidakis 2000, pp. 267–9; Byzantine Museum 2005, p. 111, fig. 88 (A. Katselaki)

The fresco of St Catherine was located on the south side of the templon-screen in the north side chapel of the Cave Monastery, and identified by the inscription H ATIA (AIKATEPINA (Mouriki 1973–74, p. 99, pl. xxviii). St Catherine is shown full length and turned in supplication towards the sanctuary. She wears a crown, earrings and luxurious imperial raiment, with a gem-studded *loros* and a thorakion as a kind of shield, as befits her aristocratic origin.

This work, which refers to the art of portable icons, is appropriate to the votive role of the portrait, stressing the eschatological character of the decoration in this funerary chapel. It represents a conservative trend in painting, characterised by the survival of iconographic and stylistic elements of Komnenian tradition (Mouriki 1973–74, pp. 106–7, 110–11, 113). The style echoes aesthetic conceptions of the twelfth century (Mouriki 1973–74, p. 106; Chatzidakis 2000, p. 268), showing how artists in thirteenth-century Greece looked back to this period for inspiration within a world dominated by Westerners, who had taken over the region after the Sack of Constantinople in 1204. A similar conception in painting is found in the north side chapel in the narthex of the Church of the Virgin at Studenica and in creations of local workshops, such as in a group of wall paintings in the Church of St Peter at Kalyvia Kouvara in Attica (Mouriki 1973–74, pp. 107, 111; Florence 1986, p. 50; Chatzidakis 2000, p. 268).

IRENE THEOCHAROPOULOU

## 256

Funerary cloth with Othon de Grandon and the Virgin and Christ

Cyprus, last quarter of the thirteenth century  
Embroidered taffeta and silk, 88 × 328 cm

**Historisches Museum, Bern**  
**PROVENANCE:** Lausanne Cathedral  
**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Carr 1955A, p. 217–4; Földes 1959B, p. 216; Wälschen 1995, pp. 279–83; Ricci 2008, pp. 373–4; Muthesius 2004, pp. 240–1; Carr 2005, pp. 307–8; Geneva 2006, no. 181, pp. 153–4 (M. Martiniani-Reber) (Lit.)

Improperly labelled as an 'antependium', this embroidered silk was originally meant as a funerary cloth, used to embellish the canopied tomb of the knight Othon de Grandon (1240–1328) in the choir of Lausanne Cathedral. Grandon was a prominent local aristocrat, who had been involved in the events connected to the fall, in 1291, of the last Latin stronghold in Palestine, the port of Acre, from where he fled to Cyprus; he later served as a diplomat for King Edward I of England. He is seen here kneeling and with joined hands in the act of recommending his soul to the mediation of the Virgin Mary, who sits on a throne with Christ on her left arm and is flanked by two censuring angels.

On technical grounds the silk is characterised by an extensive use of a gilded silver thread, whereas its stylistic, iconographic and compositional features are essentially borrowed from Byzantine tradition, although combined with minor details of Western origins, such as the representation of the kneeling donor and his coat-of-arms. Such unusual features have encouraged scholars to recognise this item as one of the deluxe textiles exported from Cyprus throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages, and recorded by cathedral inventories in Western countries as works of opus Cypense. The only other example of a medieval Cypriot textile that has been recognised by scholars is the large embroidered antependium offered to Pisa Cathedral in 1325 by the Latin archbishop of Nicosia, John of Conti, currently in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Pisa. That textile, displaying an essentially Gothic imagery interspersed with quotations from Byzantine iconography, points to the wealth of models on which Cypriot artists were able to draw for inspiration in order to satisfy their Latin and Greek patrons.

MICHELE BACCI

## 257

Glazed bowl with a representation of a fish

Cyprus, Paphos region, first half of the thirteenth century  
Clay, lead-glaze, height 9.3 cm; diameter 17 cm; diameter of base 6.8 cm

**Leventis Municipal Museum, Nicosia, inv. no. 8/1905/1970**  
**SELECTED REFERENCES:** Papantoniou-Bakirtzi 2004, no. 41, p. 97

The ceramic fabric is red and rather rough and hard. The vase has a carinated body and a foot







drawings show single figures of saints, of Christ and of the Virgin, and they seem to copy Cypriot wall paintings and icons. Folio 155v, which shows the bust of Christ in frontal pose, blessing and holding a scroll, has been compared with the thirteenth-century icon of Christ from the Church of the Virgin at Moutoullas (Hutter 1999, figs 28–9). The almond-shaped, rolling eyes of Christ in both the icon and the drawing are a Western feature and reflect historical circumstances and the presence of Westerners – Cyprus was ruled by the Lusignan dynasty from 1191. According to Hutter, who has distinguished the hand of three artists in these drawings, Christ on folio 155v was produced by painter C, whom she considers slightly later in date than painters A and B.

The drawings in the margins of the manuscript certainly give evidence of painters practising their skills by copying single representations of saints. This does not mean that it was a systematic reference set of models for other artists, but may simply show that the manuscript was considered handy for use as a sketchbook.

MARIA VASSILAKI

## 265

The doors of the Church of San Salvatore de Birecto, Atrani

1087  
Brass, 333 × 184 cm

Church of San Salvatore de Birecto, Atrani  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pansa 1724, vol. 1, p. 49; Camera 1881, pp. 443–4; Gise 1977, pp. 191–200; Martiale 1971, pp. 19–2, figs 17–20; Frazer 1973; Angeli 1981; Polacco 1988; Iacolino 2007

Today installed at the entrance of the Church of San Salvatore de Birecto in the small town of Atrani, near Amalfi, these doors were originally planned for San Sebastiano dei Mangani (an intriguing allusion to a Constantinopolitan site) in the same town. A Latin inscription informs us that Pantaleon, son of Pantaleon Viarecta, ordered the doors for the salvation of his soul in 1087. The doors have four silver-inlaid panels with images of Christ and the Virgin interceding, St Pantaleon, protector of the donor, and St Sebastian, titular saint of the church, for which the doors were originally commissioned. These four panels are centred within a field of foliate crosses. The doors should correctly be described as brass, and not bronze, since their main components are copper and zinc, with a small quantity of lead and tin (an alloy known as *auricalchum* in Latin, since it closely resembles gold). Plates made of silver were inserted into the faces and hands of the figures, and niello was used to highlight the design and the drapery, and cinnabar for the shoes of the Virgin and the inscriptions.

The programme substantially repeats that found on the doors of the Cathedral at Amalfi of 1065, the first of this type and the forerunner

of a number of other doors in South Italy and Venice. They are the model for the Atrani doors, with Christ and the interceding Virgin, plus the patron St Andrew and St Peter. However the Atrani doors have some slight but significant modifications. The position of the Virgin, to the right of Christ, is more in line with traditional iconography of the Deisis, even if the image of Christ has a triumphal overtone, with his raised hand. Unlike the doors in Amalfi and elsewhere, the standing figures are here placed against a plain background, undoubtedly in imitation of the solid, plain surfaces of gold that were largely used in Byzantium. The image of St Sebastian in military garb fits his usual iconography, while the medical saint St Pantaleon, is oddly presented as a bishop with an *omophorion*. This suggests that the inscriptions were added later, and that Pantaleon only became the patron after the doors were made and adapted a different saint to be his own patron saint.

Despite some roughness of design, it can hardly be doubted that the doors were produced in Constantinople, although this has been questioned. For such a commission, a patron from the Amalfi region could have easily turned to Constantinople, where the Amalfitani had a well-established colony, and where the Amalfi doors were made some twenty years earlier.

VALENTINO PAGE

## 8

### Beyond Byzantium

## 266

Embroidered icon with the miracle of the Hodegetria

Moscow (?), 1498 (?)  
Taffeta and damask, embroidered with gold and silver threads, 95.1 × 98 cm

State Historical Museum, Moscow (15453 shch/n.a.-2)  
PROVENANCE: from the collection of M. Zaitsevski, then of p. Shchukin; entered the State Historical Museum, Moscow, in 1905  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Scripkin 1954; Manova 1971, figs 87–8; Evseeva 1999, pp. 439–8; Preobrazhenskii 2003, pp. 201–28; Lidov 2004, pp. 291–321; New York 2004, no. 195, pp. 322–3 (L. Evseeva); Lidov 2006

We see not merely a procession but the famous Tuesday miraculous performance of the Hodegetria icon, which took place in Constantinople from the twelfth century to 1453. In the centre, as in other depictions of this miracle, is an icon-bearer, stretching out his hands and carrying the heavy panel effortlessly. This is the miracle of the metamorphosis of the icon into a weightless image, which glided around the crowded square in front of the Hodegon monastery every Tuesday morning (Lidov 2004). The bearer and those around him wear the red garments of the confraternity of the Hodegetria icon, who alone could perform the Tuesday miracle.

The paradox of this Russian embroidery is that the miracle seems to take place not in Constantinople (by this date under Ottoman control), but in Moscow and in the presence of members of the princely family and of the Russian Church (Scepkina 1954). The three men in crown-shaped caps have been identified as the Grand Prince Ivan III, his son Vassili and his young grandson Dimitri. Only two of the three, Prince Ivan and his grandson, are depicted with a nimbus – a sign of royal status. This detail helps to date the textile to 1498, when the coronation of Dimitri took place (Evseeva 1999). The iconography suggests a Muscovite performance of the Tuesday miracle, unknown from any other sources, maybe to support Russia's claim to be the successor to the Byzantine Empire after its fall in 1453 (Lidov 2006).

Perhaps the embroidery, designed to act as a cloth hanging beneath an icon (podea in Greek, podvesnaia pelena in Russian), adorned a replica of the Hodegetria icon of Constantinople, and was venerated in the Ascension Convent of the Kremlin in Moscow. One attribution of the embroidery is to the Kremlin workshop of the Grand Princess Helena Voloshanka (Maiasova 1971). Both the Moscow attribution and the dating are controversial (Preobrazhenskii 2003).

ALEXEI LIDOV

## 267

Embroidered image of St George

Moldavia, 1500  
Gold, silver and silk threads on red silk, transferred to red velvet, 125 × 97 cm

National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, inv. 75.062  
PROVENANCE: presented to the Monastery of St George on Zographou, Mount Athos, 1500–01; confiscated by French soldiers under the command of General Maurice Sarrail, 1916–17; presented to the Kingdom of Romania, 1917; deposited at the Muzeul Armatei (now Muzeul Militar Național), Bucharest, 1925; transferred to the Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, Bucharest, c. 1980  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov 1902, pp. 230–1; Pansa 1908, no. 15, p. 185; Anon. 1917; Elton 1918, no. 198, p. 284–5, with bibliography; Năsturel 1999, pp. 12–16; Truște 1999, no. 62, pp. 51–5, 196 and 229 (A. Pănescu); New York 2004, no. 194, pp. 321–2 (A. Pănescu); Bucharest 2004, no. 15, p. 85 (A. Pănescu); Năsturel 2005

It was probably the Bulgarian-born metropolitan of Suzeava Theokistos (d. 1478) who prompted Prince Stephen the Great (1457–1504) to endow the Bulgarian monastery of St George (called Zographou) on Mount Athos. In 1466 the Moldavian ruler granted the monastery an annuity and subsequently furnished it with a new hospital and refectory (Năsturel 1986, pp. 183–93; Marinescu and Merzimekis 2004). Neither building stands today and many of Stephen's smaller gifts, for example two liturgical fans (New York 2004, no. 69, pp. 132–3) and an illuminated Gospel-book (Vienna 2003, no. VI.5, pp. 362–7), are scattered abroad.

The Slavonic inscription on this textile suggests that it was made specially for a foundation dedicated to St George: 'O martyred and victorious great George, quick intercessor and kindly helper in troubles and misfortunes,

unspeakable joys [sic] to people in sorrow, accept from us also this entreaty of your humble servant Lord John Stephen, by God's grace Prince of the Land of Moldavia. Preserve him from harm in this age and in the future through the prayers of those who venerate thee, so that we may glorify thee forever...' Originally, the embroidery must have been an ecclesiastic banner (labara) or a hanging (podea) beneath a painted icon in the main Zographou church (compare RBK, vol. 5, cols 809–12). By 1898, the monks kept it in their pilgrim guestroom (archondarikon) and considered it the handiwork of Prince Stephen's daughter Helena (compare New York 2004, no. 195, pp. 322–3).

St George is usually depicted in East Christian art either standing or on horseback (Walter 2003, pp. 123–34). Images of him enthroned are rare and must have originated in the Late Byzantine period (Philes 1855–57, no. 266, vol. 1, p. 119). Several examples of this composition are known from Moldavia (Sabados 2004–05).

GEORGE R. PAPPULOV

## 268

Mosaic panel of St Stephen

c. 1108–13  
Mosaic, gold, glass and stone tesserae on plaster, 233 × 134 × 11 cm

Inscribed: O AΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ CΤΕΦΑΝΟΝ (St Stephen)  
St Sophia of Kiev, National Conservation Area  
PROVENANCE: Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, Kiev; after 1934 in the Cathedral of St Sophia, Kiev  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Labaree 1966, pp. 67–74; New York 1997, pp. 289–92

St Stephen is shown dressed as a deacon in a white sticharion with gold collar and hem, and oration over the left shoulder. He holds a gold and jewelled censer in his right hand; in his left hand, shielded by a red cloth, he holds a round box (pyxys). The background is gold, but he stands on a green ground with a strip of yellow above. Deacons, whose role is to assist priests in the liturgy, use censers to venerate Christ, the Mother of God and the saints depicted within the church and to expel evil spirits from the building. It has been suggested that the box Stephen holds contains bread for the Eucharist, as another job of deacons was to bring this to the altar. However, this would be a very unusual receptacle for Eucharistic bread, and it is also plausible that the box was an incense box used to replenish the censer.

The fragment is one of several salvaged from the Cathedral of St Michael of the Golden Domes in Kiev, which was destroyed in 1934. A few mosaic and fresco fragments were saved by experts from the Mosaic Section of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad (St Petersburg) and these are now housed in the Cathedral of St Sophia, Kiev, and the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Other surviving fragments include, most spectacularly, the Communion of the Apostles, where Christ and accompanying angels offer bread and wine to the

Apostles. The mosaic of Stephen himself was originally located on the north face of the south pier facing the sanctuary. In addition to his role in the liturgy, his depiction here may relate to his importance as the first martyr and to the supposed arrival in Rus' of the relic of his arm in the late eleventh or early twelfth century.

The Cathedral of St Michael was founded on 11 July 1108 by the Kievan prince Sviatopolk Iziaslavych and must have been completed before April 1113, when he was buried there. The title 'Golden Domes' suggests that no expense was spared in building and decorating the cathedral. The exterior domes were gilded; inside the church was filled with mosaic in the central apse and, probably, the central dome, while the walls were covered with frescoes.

LIZ JAMES

## 269

Fresco copy from the King's Church, Studenica monastery, with patrons and saints

1314 (copied by Svetislav Mandić, 20 January 1964)  
Tempera on canvas, 218 × 180 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 704  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Spaharuk 1976; Babu 1987; Radoj 1997

This section of the fresco decoration of the south wall of a chapel dedicated to SS. Joachim and Anna, parents of the Virgin Mary, represents the sponsorship and endowment of the church by King Stefan Uroš II Milutin in honour of the Enthroned Christ. King Stefan, who was born in 1253 and ruled Serbia from 1282 to 1321, is shown with his fourth wife Queen Simonida, daughter of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328). His marriage to this Byzantine princess in 1299 was a diplomatic success in pacifying the Balkans and tensions between Byzantium and Serbia as a result of his aggressive campaigns into disputed territories.

The imagery shows the appropriation of Byzantine models by the Serbian rulers: the king holds a model of the church, a formula often found in Byzantine church decorations, and both wear Byzantine-style royal vestments. An inscription identifies Simonida as 'Simonida, by God's mercy, queen of Komnina Palaiologina'. She is painted with a flat, oval face with high arched eyebrows and a small nose and mouth. This is a formula for conveying the idea of elegance and royalty in painted portraits of the twelfth century in Byzantium. This portrait of King Stefan Milutin is one of fourteen found in the Balkans and painted in his lifetime. The inscription reads: 'Stefan Uroš, by God's mercy, our king and autocrat of all Serbian lands and seas.' St Anna holds a small figure of the Virgin Mary.

BOJAN POPOVIĆ

## 270

Fresco copy from Sopoćani monastery with King Stefan Uroš I and Prince Dragutin, the Virgin and Child

Third quarter of the thirteenth century (copied by Časlav Colić, 20 December 1987)  
Tempera on canvas, 138 × 350 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 1327  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Spaharuk 1976; Djonić 1991; Radjović 1997  
Tadić 2000; Tadić 2006–07

This fresco decorated the grand mid-thirteenth-century Monastery of Sopoćani (which later became a cathedral). It was in the narthex on the east wall to the right of the main entrance door into the church. It represents the Serbian King Stefan Uroš I presenting his eldest son Stefan Dragutin to the Virgin enthroned with Christ. On the east part of the south wall of the narthex and so adjoining this panel were paintings of his wife Queen Helena and their second son, the future Stefan Uroš II Milutin.

Stefan Uroš I was the youngest son of Stefan and Anna, the daughter of Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice. He was King of Serbia from 1243 to 1276. His wife was either an Angevin princess or perhaps a daughter of a Latin emperor of Constantinople.

Stefan was ousted by his son Dragutin (1276–82), and died at Sopoćani in 1277. Dragutin ruled until 1282, when his brother Milutin became king (see cat. 540). This portrait was made in happier times for Stefan, when he was grooming his elder son for the succession. Both wear Byzantine-style imperial robes and insignia.

BOJAN POPOVIĆ

## 271.1–4

Enamel plaques with St John the Baptist and the Archangels Michael and Gabriel

Constantinople (?), second half of the eleventh century  
Cloisonné enamel and gold, 5.9 × 5.5 cm; 5.8 × 5.3 cm; 5.8 × 5.3 cm; 5.3 × 5.3 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. nos 302, 301, 300, 303  
PROVENANCE: monastery of Chilandari, Mount Athos  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Nitz 2000

These enamel plaques are known to have decorated the sixteenth-century cover of the thirteenth-century manuscript of the Four Gospels of the Bulgarian King George Terter in the monastery of Chilandari on Mount Athos. The topmost gold sheet of each has been cut out to make a contour of the figure, while the lower embossed sheet makes a receptacle, in which strips form cells for the enamels. Most of the colours are opaque, but one green is transparent.

We do not know how many pieces formed the original set of enamels. Stylistically, comparison with the crown of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55) and the holy crown of Hungary (1074–77), both now in Budapest, reveals that they belong to the eleventh century (not later than



the 1070s). The paleography on the enamel plaques is similar to the inscriptions on the Hungarian crown. It may be assumed that the ornamental enamel was part of the original (incomplete) set.

Constantinople was the key place for the manufacture of such enamels. The pieces may have reached Čilindari as a gift from a Byzantine or Serbian ruler or church dignitary.

ALEKSANDRA NITIĆ AND ŽELJKA TUMIRSKI

## 272

### Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century  
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 3.3 cm; diameter 6.6 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 319  
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Priština

## 273

### Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century  
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 3.1 cm; diameter 6.6 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 319  
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Priština

## 274

### Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century  
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 2.4 cm; diameter 6.8 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 319  
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Priština

Large and embellished with filigree, these hinged bracelets are part of the Byzantine tradition and, together with diadems and earrings, were adopted very early on by the wives of rich landowners in Russia and Eastern and Southern Europe, but also, in a more modest form, by women generally as a form of personal adornment. Hinged bracelets are often decorated with the figures of animals, birds and plants. They recall the cloth bracelets often seen on the secular clothing in fresco paintings (Radojković 1966, pp. 44–5); some examples embroidered with gold and pearls, which were worn with church vestments, have also been preserved in Serbia (Stojanović 1959, pp. 67–9, figs 4, 5, 16, 18, 54).

The bracelets from Markova Varoš are distinguished by precise craftsmanship and are open and linked semicircular shapes, which offer various decorative possibilities. This dynamic impression is further enhanced by triangular groups of granules set into rows of circular segments. The fashion for bulky rounded shapes decorated with little cones of granules goes back to very early examples of Serbian goldsmiths' art, the most famous being the ring of King Stefan I (early thirteenth century) (Milošević 1990, pp. 169–70, 171–2).

In addition to these three bracelets, two more of the same type were discovered at Markova Varoš; these have suffered varying degrees of damage. Four bore almost identical decoration, while the fifth (cat. 274) is thinner by the width of the decorative border on the edge of the other bracelets.

BRANKA IVANIĆ

## 275

### Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century  
Silver, cast, wrought, twisted, granulation, filigree, height 2.7 cm; width 8.9 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 319  
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Priština

This large elliptical bracelet has a central part composed of four wires twisted into a spiral whose ends meet and extend to form a trapezoid shape. The extended ends of this open bracelet are decorated with granules spaced at intervals and encircled with filigree wire.

Open bracelets are one of the earliest forms of jewellery for the hand. Excavations have revealed examples from the time when metal was first used (Garašanin 1983, p. 745). In the Balkans this type of bracelet, also called belenzuk, followed on from the Late Greco-Roman open bracelet with broad ends bearing simple decoration or fashioned into the shape of a snake (Čorović-Ljubinković 1977, p. 75). Moreover, this type of bracelet was frequently found on the territory settled by the east and south Slavs. The belenzuk, made of thick silver wire twisted into a spiral, became popular from the first half of the thirteenth century onwards in the Balkans (Milošević 1990, pp. 172–3). The belenzuk open bracelet also passed into ethnic jewellery, except that the technique of twisting wire died out after the Middle Ages. In the Balkans between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, belenzuk bracelets became even larger and took on elements of oriental decoration (Ivanić 1995, pp. 101–2).

BRANKA IVANIĆ

## 276

### Queen Theodora's ring

Serbia, before 1332  
Gold, niello, height 2.9 cm; width 2.3 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 319  
PROVENANCE: found in 1915 in the tomb of Queen Theodora, Banjska monastery  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Novaković 1912; Radojković 1969a; Milošević 1990, no. 77

This ring was cast as a single piece, with an engraved representation of a double-headed eagle on its head and a Cyrillic inscription on its shoulders (He who wears it may God help him). The ring has several different messages. The representation of the double-headed eagle, emblem of the royal house of Nemanjić, indicates

the origin and status of the ring's owner, the wife of the Serbian king Stefan III Dečanski (1322–55) and mother of the most powerful Serbian ruler, Stefan IV Dušan (1331–55): STEFANUS, DEI GRATIA ROMANIE, SCLAVONIE ET ALBANIE (Novaković 1912, p. 715). The motto of the inscription has a prophylactic purpose. The ring band is notched and the notches filled with niello divided into rhombs showing fantastic creatures and floral decoration in a Western style. This use of motifs, present not only in jewellery, but also in miniatures, stone sculptural decoration and architecture, reflects a style that was present simultaneously in Serbia and in Byzantium and the West.

The ring is probably the work of one of the Serbian goldsmiths' workshops in Kosovo and Metohija, which produced a great number of rings with the same technical and stylistic features. The shape of the ring, the magical, prophylactic and symbolic character of the ornamentation, and the formula of the inscription point to a group of rings from Serbia and neighbouring countries that can be dated to a period lasting from the end of the thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century (Radojković 1969b, pp. 107–29; Milošević 1990, nos 82–8).

Queen Theodora (d. 1332) is buried in the church of Banjska monastery, the foundation and mausoleum of King Milutin (father of King Stefan Dečanski), during a period marked by the influence of Byzantium on political relations, spirituality and customs.

EMINA ZEČEVIĆ

## 277

### Ring

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century

Silver, cast, twisted, granulation, filigree, height 3 cm; width 2.5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 318  
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Priština

The bezel of this ring is an inverted flat-topped cone. The surface is decorated with an eight-petalled rosette made of filigree wire. Each petal has a coil of filigree wire set into it. Granules set in the centre and at the edges of the bezel complete the ornamentation. The hoop of the ring consists of two thick wires and one filigree wire twisted together.

This ring reveals a sense of the synthesis and unity of style inherent in medieval costume. The twisted-wire technique links this ring to the belenzuk bracelets, while the filigree decoration on the bezel is found on both types of bracelet. The twisted-wire hoop is not common in medieval jewellery (Milošević 1990, p. 80). As far as the filigree decoration is concerned, it is analogous with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century jewellery in the Balkan peninsula.

The entire find from Markova Varoš is unique in that it contains all the elements of the jewellery worn by the female aristocracy and hence completes our knowledge of what was worn by women in the ruling and landowning classes.

BRANKA IVANIĆ

## 278

### Buckle of Prince Petar of Hum

Goldsmith's workshop in Split, 1220s  
Gold, 5.1 × 5.4 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 225  
PROVENANCE: Discovered by chance near Budimlje, Montenegro, 1881  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Koraćević 1884, pp. 110–11; Milošević 1987, pp. 179–80; Radojković 1969b, pp. 105–6, 107, pls XI–XIII

This buckle is heavy, circular in shape, with a rhomboid profile. Its catch is movable. On the outside edge of the front of the buckle an inscription is carved in two languages, Church Slavonic and Latin: +ZAPONY VELHEGAKNYZA XYLSKOGA PETRA: PRETENDE COMITI PET, the inside edge is decorated by a row of stylised leaves. On the inside edge of the back of the buckle there is an almost identical motif of stylised leaves, while the outside edge displays carved animals facing each other: birds, dogs, dragons and other monsters with tails that end in the shape of a palm. This style of embellishment was much used in Romanesque and Gothic sculpture and in illustrated manuscripts. To judge by the inscription, the buckle must have belonged to Petar, son of Prince Miroslav, who ruled over the Hum region. It is presumed that Petar was given this buckle upon being elected Prince of Split in 1222.

The excellent quality of the craftsmanship and the skilful combination of gold and niello places this buckle among the masterpieces of thirteenth-century goldsmiths' art.

MIROSLAV FIDANOVIĆ

## 279

### Dušan's cup

Serbia, 1345–55  
Silver, gilded, cast, engraved, height 3.6 cm; diameter 18.6 cm; width with handle 20.8 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 226  
PROVENANCE: Church of St Nikola, Drenova  
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1904, no. 20, p. 48; J. Jovanović; Radojković 1966, p. 32; Radojković 1969b, p. 116; Belgrade 1991, p. 31; M. Sprenkle; Salonta 1984, pp. 75–6

This shallow cup has a crescent handle. On the elevated base is a medallion with a heraldic double-headed eagle surrounded by a band bearing the inscription: + STEPANY C(a)RY GE XRNSTE BLA(ro)VERYNI (Stephen, Emperor faithful in Christ). The engraved surface of the medallion resembles the texture of textile. It is possible that the Serbian insignia on textiles were used as the model. They are represented in documents, in a map dated 1339 by the Italian

cartographer Angelino Dulcerte. The same double-headed eagle is present on the Serbian national flag.

The heritage of Byzantine art is reflected not only in the shape of the cup, but also in the abundant motifs of the tendril and acanthus leaves. As it was discovered in a wall cavity in the narthex of the Church of St Nikola, Drenova, Dušan's cup had belonged probably to the church treasury. This by no means excludes the possibility that, prior to the being donated to the church, it had belonged to a particular person.

The heraldic figure of the double-headed eagle and the inscription with the name of the emperor reveals that the cup was made especially for Dušan's court. Mention of the name Stjepan, instead of Stefan, indicates a possible Western influence. Historical sources record that Tsar Stefan Dušan ordered 33 silver cups from Venice (Radojković 1969b, p. 116).

NATAŠA CEROVIĆ

## 280

### Cup

Serbia, fifteenth century  
Silver, gilt, cast, chased, punctuated, engraved, soldered, 5.6 × 15 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 298  
PROVENANCE: Dobri Dol, near Ploče  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Tomic 1960–61; Radojković 1966, p. 32; Salonta 1984, p. 161

This deep calotte-shaped cup with its broad downward-curving rim, accentuated edges and flat bottom belongs to a type mentioned in church inventories.

The decoration consists of three alternating concentric bands. The figure of a deer on the bottom, with its head missing, is soldered onto a medallion with the fight between Samson and the lion. It alternates with a broader band of a double row of broken arches facing each other. Between the arches are ivy leaves and lilies. The broad rim is decorated with the same motifs. This combination of religious symbols of the deer, the lily and ivy with the Old Testament story is a familiar feature of Byzantine art.

The shape of the cup, and the treatment of the lily in combination with the Gothic arches, is influenced by Venetian craftsmanship. Artists in the workshops of Dubrovnik incorporated Western and Eastern forms in their products, which may be the provenance of this piece.

This cup, like others found in the hoard from Dobri Dol, together with the pieces of jewellery discovered there, helps to build a profile of art in Serbia.

NATAŠA CEROVIĆ

## 281

### Royal doors with the Annunciation

Serbia, second half of the fourteenth century  
Tempera (?) on wood, relief, woodcarving, 128 × 62.5 × 5.4 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 345  
PROVENANCE: Church of St Nikola, Salonta  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Čorović-Ljubinković 1976, pp. 33–5, pls IVb–Vb; Weinmann et al. 1986, p. 193

These are the central ('royal') doors from an unidentified iconostasis. They are divided into two parts – the larger showing the Annunciation, the smaller containing carved decoration – that are framed by a partially preserved, carved, polychromatic border with double interlacing over leather strips.

The figures of the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin are executed in bas-relief, then painted, while the segment of heaven with cross-shaped ray which contains the dove of the Holy Spirit is painted. The two figures are elongated. Gabriel, whose arms are out of proportion to his body, is more voluminous than the figure of the Virgin. The painted surface has been damaged.

The iconography and style point to a local workshop around the middle or second half of the fourteenth century. These doors are known as the Andrejaš doors, although there is no proof that they belonged to the Andrejaš monastery (1388–89).

SANJA PAJEĆ AND SOFIJA KAJTEZ

## 282

### Fragment of a reliquary

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century  
Carved wood, chased silver, 4.4 × 3.3 × 0.9 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 377  
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Priština

Faith among the laity entailed the wearing of miniature icons round the neck. The most modest of these were made of wood. It was extremely important for the ruling class to demonstrate their piety, so the only neck decoration found in this hoard was a little pendant icon on which three holy warriors are represented. It was a widespread custom in Byzantium to decorate parts of the holy cross or reliquaries of saints in a sumptuous way. Transformed into jewellery, these reliquaries accompanied their owners at all times and thus ensured their protection.

It cannot be established whether this fragment was the front or back of the reliquary. There are examples with the Virgin on the front and the holy warriors on the back (W. Wixom in New York 1997, p. 164). The preserved half of this rectangular reliquary depicts three saints, portrayed frontally: St Georgios (ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ), St Demetrios, Ο ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ, and the third, probably one of the two saints Theodore, judging by the preserved part of the inscription ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ. The saints are presented in full military dress. A similar reliquary was discovered



in another late medieval hoard in the village of Gomo Orizari.

The stylised portrayal of the holy warriors as lean, delicate figures of ascetic appearance recalls the figures of the late thirteenth century (Radojković 1966, p.15, note 15). The silver relief surface has been worn smooth and is tarnished in parts, which proves that this reliquary was in use for a long time. The precision and delicacy of the craftsmanship is notable.

BRANKA IVANIĆ

## 283

### Earrings

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century  
Silver-gilt, gemstones, cast, faceted, hammered, filigree,  
6.9 × 7.2 cm (setting); 4 × 7.4 cm (fragment)

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 308  
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Pilipci

These fine earrings (one of which is a fragment) were designed to be affixed to a wreath or crown by a row of pearls or strips of expensive cloth, so that in fact they were completely unattached to the ears themselves. Some similar examples even retain an original band of filigree wire that was worn over the head to join the earrings and make it easier to wear heavy pieces of jewellery. Large earrings or ear decorations were an integral part of the jewellery worn by the wife of a ruler or rich landowner, according to both written and art sources (Radojković 1969b, p.140). They differ from the delicate, small earrings, sometimes made of gold, which were reserved for everyday wear.

The earrings from Markova Varoš consist of metal rings linked to the semicircular body of the earring, in which there is a filigree wire shaped like an eagle with outstretched wings. Around this central part there are flat-topped cones whose narrow ends join onto the central part from where they radiate outwards like the spokes of a wheel. The cones vary in size, and the alternative grouping of large and small cones matches the alternate use of filigree decoration at the base of the small cones and semi-precious coloured stones set into the base of the larger ones. Judging by their appearance, it is clear that the head ornament from the same hoard (cat.284) and the earrings are not part of a set.

These earrings belong to the 'Dragičevo' type, and many have been discovered all over Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Greece. These relatively frequent finds are mirrored by a large number of representations in church frescoes in the same territories (Radojković 1966, pp.42–3). Current thinking dates the earliest appearance of this type of earring to the late thirteenth century (Milošević 1990, pp.159–60). These earrings long continued to be worn and after the demise of the Serbian landowning class, they became an item of

formal jewellery in women's national folk costume (Radojković 1966, pp.248–9).

BRANKA IVANIĆ

## 284

### Head ornament

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century  
Silver-gilt, gemstones, beaten, filigree, semi-precious stones,  
length 23 cm; width 2 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 306  
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Pilipci  
SELECTED REFERENCE: Radojković 1966, pp.248–9

This head ornament, which was worn across the forehead, was described in texts as a garland or wreath (Radojković 1966, pp.36–40). This garland belongs to the relatively small number of head ornaments preserved in Eastern and Southern Europe. It formed part of the jewellery worn by women of all social groups, but this very costly example must have been worn by the wife of a ruler or rich landowner. As a head ornament, it makes up a set with earrings (see cat.283), which are found far more often. Numerous portraits show the garland as a fastening for a headscarf (Milošević 1990, p.177). These ornaments can be made of metal, with or without precious or semi-precious stones, or of fine cloth embroidered with gold or silver thread and pearls (Ercegović-Pavlović 1975, pp.279–83).

The garland consists of eight rectangular plates joined together by hinges. The end plates each have a metal ring that acts as a fastener. A multi-coloured semi-precious stone is set into each plate. There is filigree floral decoration around the setting of each stone.

In style, the wreath resembles the rest of the jewellery found at Markova Varoš. As is frequently the case with Serbian medieval art, the general appearance and shape of the objects were taken from the Orient, but they were fashioned in the specific style of some Western artwork; such a combination is evident in all the items of jewellery found there. There are clear analogies between this ornament, reminiscent in style of the thirteenth-century Hungarian crown jewels (Milošević 1990, p.177), and art objects fashioned by Serbian goldsmiths from an earlier period (Radojković 1969b, pp.89–90), which testifies to the constant blending of different cultures in the Balkan peninsula.

BRANKA IVANIĆ

## 285

### Stone khatchkar of Aputayli

Noraduz cemetery in Sevan, near Lake Sevan, northern  
Armenia, 1225  
Tufa (stone), 175 × 100 × 31 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. no. 1977.5.5.1  
SELECTED REFERENCE: Azarian 1975, pl.66 (showing the khatchkar before its removal from Noraduz); London 1978, no.119, pl.139; West 1980, London 2001, no.14

Khatchkars (simply an Armenian word meaning 'stone cross') are an important feature of the Armenian landscape. They can be found in their thousands throughout the country, and in a variety of settings: in graveyards, incorporated into the walls of churches and carved into cliffs. They appear from the ninth century on (an evolution of earlier steles in both form and function) and served a variety of purposes, usually concerned with commemoration (Donabédian 2007; Azarian 1970). Most, as this example, were tomb-markers that were placed facing west at the foot of the burial, so that the cross would be the first thing seen by the dead person as he or she rose at the Second Coming. Others were commissioned to commemorate the completion of buildings and bridges, to celebrate military victories or to mark the fulfilment of vows.

This khatchkar was created as a memorial. It was designed to stand over a tomb in Noraduz cemetery, near Lake Sevan in the north of Armenia, and is dated by an inscription down its left edge to the year 1225: 'In 674 of the Armenian era. God have mercy on Aputayli. Amen.' Aputayli is otherwise unattested. The khatchkar is typical of its period in terms of its design: carved of a dark tufa stone, it is rectangular in shape with a slight overhang at the top. Its decoration is dominated by the central cross, in this case arising from palmettes (and so, perhaps, alluding to the cross as the Tree of Life). It is supplemented by secondary crosses below and to the left, and is framed by a series of interlaced patterns. In the course of the thirteenth century, khatchkars were to become more intricate and elaborate, incorporating more figurative imagery. At the same time the decorative patterns were to become more and more influenced by Islamic motifs.

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 286

### Paten (diskos) with scenes of the Passion of Christ

Central Asia, ninth or tenth century  
Gilded, cast, chased and incised silver, diameter 23 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. 49.154  
PROVENANCE: found near the village of Grigorovskoye, Saklankin Uezd, region of Perm, 1867  
SELECTED REFERENCE: Khoslov, Pokrovskii and Smirnov 1892, St Petersburg 1908, pp.191–3 (B. Marshak)

A paten is a special dish used in the liturgy to hold the bread of the Eucharist. Three scenes fill the three entwined medallions: the Ascension (top), the Holy Women at the tomb (left) and the Crucifixion (right). At the bottom can be seen Daniel in the Lions' Den; on the left are two kneeling soldiers, keepers of the tomb; to the right is the Denial of Peter. At the centre is a cross. The scenes are identified by inscriptions in Syriac in the 'estrangela' script, the form used for sacred writings (clockwise from the top): 'the Ascension of Christ'; 'Simon-Peter denying Christ three times before the cock crows'; 'the Crucifixion of Christ'.

with on the left 'the thief whose sins Christ forgave' and on the right, 'the thief on his left'; over the image of the left lion, 'Daniel'; on the image of the two Holy Women, 'Mary Magdalene, Mary', over the angel, 'the Angel', and in the tomb, 'the Anastasis'; and 'the soldiers guarding the tomb'.

One feature of the iconography of the Ascension as it is shown here is distinctive: Mary is not represented at the centre of the twelve Apostles, as is usual in Byzantine art, although she is shown at the empty tomb. This significant omission has been used to argue that this paten was made for an Assyrian church of the East, which used the Nestorian liturgy. The Nestorians (who followed the theology of Nestorius, which was condemned as heresy at the Council of Chalcedon in 451) split from the Orthodox church of Constantinople in the fifth century over the issue of the status of Mary as a mother. They rejected the idea that she was Theotokos, and saw her as Christotokos, believing that Christ took his human nature from Mary, but that the divine logos existed before the incarnation. The emphasis on the exaltation of the Cross might refer to Nestorian knowledge of the Apocryphal Gospel of St Peter (x, 35–42).

The style and treatment of the subjects have several connections with Early Byzantine works from the region of Syria and Palestine (such as the ampullae from the Holy Land). But the garments and mandorla of Christ in the Ascension point to a production in Central Asia in the ninth or tenth century, and perhaps to the region of Semirechye, the south-eastern part of modern Kazakhstan. Odd mistakes in the inscriptions suggest that perhaps the Syriac language was not the native tongue of the artist.

VERA ZALESKAYA

## 287

### Gospels with Tsar Ivan Alexander, folio 272v

Turnovo, 1355–56  
Tempera and gold on parchment, 35.5 × 25 cm

The British Library, London, Add. Ms. 39697  
PROVENANCE: by the seventeenth century at the Monastery of St Paul on Mount Athos, acquired by Robert Curzon in August 1893; donated to the British Library, London, in 1917  
SELECTED REFERENCE: Dimitrova 1994, New York 2004, no.27, pp.56–57 (S. McKendrick)

These four Gospels written in Bulgarised Church Slavonic by a scribe, Simeon, are a tour de force of the grand illuminated book. The manuscript opens with a striking double-page portrait of the Tsar Ivan Alexander with his wife, two sons, three daughters and one son-in-law. It has 286 folios with 366 narrative miniatures illustrating each of the Gospels in turn in frieze format. It also has five further representations of the Tsar at the end of each of the Gospels (folios 272v and 134v are example of these images).

The manuscript was probably produced at

Turnovo, the capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire ruled by Ivan Alexander from 1331 until his death in 1371. The manuscript declares visually both the rivalry that Ivan Alexander felt towards Byzantium, and also a period of greater friendship after 1355 when John VI Kantakouzenos was forced to abdicate and John V Palaiologos became the Byzantine emperor. This co-operation was marked by the marriage of one of Ivan's daughters to the future emperor Andronikos IV Palaiologos. The imagery implies that Ivan Alexander's dynasty was as powerful as the emperors of Constantinople (in fact the Bulgarian empire fell to the Ottomans in 1396), and his title emulated Byzantium with its terminology – 'In Christ God faithful Emperor and Autocrat of all Bulgarians'. The manuscript achieves his ambitions to be 'more Byzantine than the Byzantines' through its luxury, style, with a lavish use of gold leaf, and contents. It must have copied an eleventh-century model produced at the Monastery of St John Studios at Constantinople in the same distinctive style as the Theodore Psalter of 1066 (cat.51). The artists presumably had a Gospel-book equivalent to this psalter (one exists in Paris [Bibliothèque nationale, cod.gr. 74]). They changed the imagery of their model so that it promoted not the abbot but a Bulgarian king. The artists faithfully re-created the exquisite style and standards of this monastery with its famous scriptorium for its Bulgarian fourteenth-century audience.

ROBIN CORMACK

## 288

### Fragments of the robe of Tsar Ivan Alexander

Byzantium, 1331–71  
Silk-based textile embroidered with silver-gilt, silver and silk threads, 8.5 × 49 cm; 8.5 × 48 cm; 8 × 46.5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 3844  
PROVENANCE: Church of St Nicholas, Staničenje, near Pirot  
SELECTED REFERENCE: Njirić and Tomerinski 2006

These fragments of gold-embroidered textile, discovered in tomb 15 in the Church of St Nicholas, Staničenje, near Pirot (1331–32), are preserved in the form of strips. On five strips there are repeated motifs in tendrils: a deer, a double-headed eagle, a crane and tablets with the name and title of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Alexander (1331–71). The sixth strip bears the motif of an arcade with double-headed eagles above. The inscriptions date the robe to the reign of Ivan Alexander. The nobleman buried in the tomb was probably given the robe by Ivan Alexander.

The embroidery worked in silver-gilt and silver wire is surface-couched on ochre silk. The style of the gold embroidery shows the influence of Italian silk. Silks from Venice were very popular in late Byzantium. The gold-embroidery programme is imperial in its iconography of double-headed eagles.

The robe, probably tight and knee-length, was buttoned from the neck to the thighs with ball-shaped silver-gilt buttons. The gold embroidery was placed alongside the buttoning. The robe was probably made in a Byzantine workshop.

ALEXANDRA NITIC AND ŽELJKO TOMERINSKI

## 289

### The Vani Gospels, folio 3v

Constantinople, c.1200  
Manuscript, 28.5 × 19.5 cm; 247 folios

National Centre of Manuscripts, Thessaloniki, inv. no. 1000  
SELECTED REFERENCE: Roudometov and Roudometov 1969, no.43, pp.47–50; Tzavetaki 1992; Shoradze 1994, pp.107–10; Amiranashvili 1966, pp.237–3; Amiranashvili 1966, pls 30–3; Bender et al. 1984, pp.131, 132, 138

The Vani Gospels, written in the Georgian *nuskhari* script, show the continuing close relationship between Georgia and Byzantium around the year 1200. The creation of the manuscript is recorded in two brief colophons, both written in gold, on folio 272v. One, in Georgian, states that the text was written in the city of Constantinople by a monk called Iovane, who calls himself 'the unworthy and wretched confessor of the Saint Queen Tamar'. The second, in Greek, states that it was illuminated by the chrysographer Michael Koresis. Another colophon on folio 266v is concerned to demonstrate the accuracy of the translation from Greek into Georgian. It says that the text was copied from a manuscript of the Gospels held at the Hromana monastery near Constantinople (the main centre of Georgian monasticism in the region), which in turn copied the autograph translation made by St Giorgi the Athonite. This was kept at the Iviron monastery on Mount Athos, where this great Georgian translator had worked. This interest in the historical accuracy of the text is at odds with the images that accompany it: these reflect the most modern interests in Byzantine Gospel illumination. After a prologue showing Christ blessing the four Evangelists, each Gospel is preceded by an author-portrait accompanied by a scene from the Life of Christ (Matthew is paired with the Nativity; Mark with the Baptism; Luke with the Annunciation; John with the Anastasis). This follows a liturgical model established in Constantinople at the start of the century (Meredith 1966). The canon tables at the start of the text are also gloriously enlivened by colourful headpieces, replete with figures, birds, animals and plants, and personifications of the months.

The scribe tells us that he was confessor to Queen Tamar of Georgia (1184–1210). Her rule is associated with the greatest efflorescence of Georgian culture and power; she was celebrated in her lifetime in art and poetry, and subsequently came to lie at the heart of much Georgian national folklore. The reference to her in the colophon as a saint indicates that this



sanctification of the queen began during her lifetime (Eastmond 1998, pp. 93–184).

The Gospels were once housed in a magnificent fourteenth-century metalwork case, which was fortunately photographed before it was stolen and destroyed during the Russian Revolution (Taqa'ishvili 1935, pls 41–4).

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 290

### Covers of the Tsqarostavi Gospels

Tao-Klarjeti (south-west Georgia), 1195.  
Manuscript with silver-gilt covers, 24.5 × 16.5 cm

National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-909  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Rondokan and Bakradze 1929, no. 99, pp. 42–4; Abuladze 1958, pp. 127–7; Chikobava 1979, pp. 220–1; Amiranshili 1984, Mchavariani 1989, pp. 107–11; Balashvili 1999, no. 107, B. Mchavariani

Georgia excelled at the production of repoussé metalwork throughout the Middle Ages, and preserves large numbers of icons and other objects made in this technique. The covers of the Tsqarostavi Gospels are one of the outstanding examples from the late twelfth century. They were made by the goldsmith Beka Opizari. The front cover shows the Crucifixion, with Christ between his mother and St John the Evangelist. The back shows the Deesis, with Christ now enthroned, while Mary and St John the Baptist intercede on behalf of humankind. The image of intercession is matched by the three inscriptions around it, which call for salvation for those involved in the commissioning and creation of the covers. The two formal texts written in *asomtavruli* script enframed above and below Christ name the commissioner Ioane Mibevari (Bishop of Tbeti); the one squeezed alongside the throne of Christ names the artist: 'Christ, have mercy on the goldsmith Beka Opizari' (Amiranashvili 1964, p. 7).

Beka Opizari is the most famous of Georgia's medieval goldsmiths, along with his contemporary (and possibly teacher) Beshken Opizari, whose covers for the Berta Gospels (National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-906) seem to have been the immediate model for this set of covers. He is also recorded as producing the covers of the Anchi gospels (now lost) and the frame of the Anchiskhati, the miraculous icon of Christ at Anchi (which survives in the State Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi). This was commissioned by its bishop, Ioane Rkinaceli, and paid for by Queen Tamar (1184–1210).

The manuscript itself was copied out in 1195 by two scribes, Ioane Pukaralisdze and Giorgi Setaisdze, whose names are recorded in a colophon. A further colophon on folio 273r records the commissioning of the covers: 'the covers of these gospels contain silver worth 200 drama, and gold and pearls and precious stones worth 20 drama. The wage of the silversmith was 23 drama' (Abuladze 1958, p. 324).

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 291

### Covers of the Tbeti Gospels

Shavsheti (south-west Georgia), late twelfth century  
Manuscript with silver gilt covers, 26.7 × 19.5 cm

National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-909  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Mchavariani 1984, pp. 137–8; Macaluso 1985, pp. 98–100; Abuladze 1958, pp. 331–8; Chikobava 1979, pp. 220–1; Amiranshili 1984, pp. 261–2; Balashvili 1999, pp. 261–2; B. Mchavariani

The covers of the Tbeti Gospels are a second commission of the bishop of Tbeti, Ioane. Like the Tsqarostavi Gospels (cat. 290) and the Berta Gospels, the front cover shows the Crucifixion, with Christ on the Cross being mourned by Mary and John the Evangelist and two angels. The Georgian uncial inscription over Christ's head reads 'Jesus Christ, king of the Jews'. The back cover, however, has a different iconography: it shows Christ handing the keys of Heaven to St Peter and a book to St Paul. The two Apostles raise their hands to Christ to acknowledge his dominion. Squeezed between them is a sixteen-line inscription in Georgian *asomtavruli* script that reads: 'The ones [i.e. the Apostles Peter and Paul] whom the Teacher [i.e. Christ] ordered to be seated at the thrones at the day of Judgement, [may you] intercede for me, Ioane Mibevari-Sapareli, pitiful of soul. Amen.'

Despite its poor condition, the delicacy of the craftsmanship is evident in the finely wrought figures, the decorative script used for the inscriptions and the elegant vegetal scroll motif that runs around the frame. Together, the two book covers underline the importance that Georgians placed on the suitable adornment of the New Testament: the Word of God. The quality and style of the metalwork is closely linked with that of the Tsqarostavi Gospels, although there is disagreement about whether it can be linked with Beka Opizari himself.

SS. Peter and Paul are also invoked in the main colophon in the manuscript, which had been commissioned by an earlier bishop of Tbeti, Pavle. This colophon dates the manuscript as it also refers to the Georgian capture in 1161 of Ani, the old capital of Armenia. It was taken in that year by the army of King Giorgi III (1156–84) from the Muslim Shaddadid emirs that had bought the city from its Seljuq conquerors in 1087 in return for a group of golden icons (Thomson 1989, p. 195).

ANTONY EASTMOND

## 292

### Four Gospels with Christ, donor and scribe, folio 13 verso

Produced in 1342 at the Monastery of Drazark in Cilicia during the prelate of Ter Mkhitar, and Ter Baillios, at the request of the priest Tiratou, and illuminated by Sargis Pidsak  
Parchment, written in regular *bolorgir* script in black ink, 29.5 × 14.5 cm; 350 folios

On loan from the Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Arm. no. 514  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Der Nersessian 1978, no. 514, pp. 101–4, pl. 15; Chikobava 1979, Der Nersessian 1993

The frontispiece, with Christ blessing the donor and the scribe, is striking. In the manuscripts of an earlier period Armenian artists had usually represented only the donor in a prominent position. But, in the fourteenth century, painters' portraits begin to appear frequently. Three self-portraits of Sargis Pidsak (1290–1355) have survived. The first appears in the Gospel of Venice (Venice MS 97/16, AD 1331), where he represents himself kneeling at the feet of Matthew. Here Sargis Pidsak has a black thick beard and looks like a man in his thirties, but in his next portrait, painted in 1338, he gives the impression of a middle-aged person (Erevan Mat. MS 2627) and in this manuscript, painted in 1342, he is already an elderly man with a white beard. These changes in his personal appearance clearly indicate that Sargis Pidsak tried each time to give a faithful image, and these miniatures are important examples of the art of portraiture in the fourteenth century.

Portraits of scribes and artists are rare in Byzantine manuscripts but occur frequently in Armenian ones. This is in keeping with the Armenian practice of recording the scribes and painters in the colophon in order that their names might be recalled and prayers said for them by all present and future readers. Their portraits are an additional means of perpetuating their memory.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 293

### The Armenian Psalter of King Levon III

Sis, the capital of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, 1283.  
Illuminated by Sargis Pidsak  
Vellum; written in *bolorgir* script, 24 × 17.5 cm; 259 folios

The British Library, London, Or 1964  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hapetsian 1932; Sotuhely's 1977, no. 175 (V. Nersessian); London 2001, no. 192

In this Psalter of King Levon III (1269–89) the Virgin is seated on a throne, with the Christ Child, here portrayed more as an adolescent, on her lap. Both raise their hands in blessing. Legends in white uncials on a blue background above each figure read 'Mother of God' (MAYR A[stoudos]Y) and 'Jesus Christ' (Y[isou]S K[r]ist[os]). An angel in the top left corner offers a kerchief. In the lower left corner a lay figure, expensively robed, kneels and extends his hands in prayer; the legend in white uncials above him reads 'Mother of God. Baron Hanes, Chancellor relies on thee'. Looking straight ahead with her right hand extended, she blesses Chancellor Hanes (Hovhannes = Joannis).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 294

### STEPANOS VAHKAISI (1230–95) Breviary of King LEVON III of Cilician Armenia, folio 10r

Sis, the capital city of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia (?), 1269–89  
Copied for King Levon III (1269–89), son of Het'um (1240–1269)  
Parchment, written in *bolorgir* script, 16.5 × 13 cm; 190 folios

The British Library, London, Or 1964  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Nersessian 1978, no. 21, pp. 46–47; Sotuhely's 1977, no. 175 (V. Nersessian); London 2001, no. 192, pp. 106–7; Der Nersessian 1993, pp. 150–7; Hapetsian 1932, no. 192, pp. 106–7; London 2007, no. 191

St Nerses IV Klayetsi, called *Shnorhali*, i.e. 'the Gracious' (1102–1173), catholicos of All Armenians (1166–1173), praying, is figured in the frontispiece, before his prayer for the twenty-four hours, while the king's portrait faces St Nerses's 'In faith I confess' profession of faith on the Holy Trinity. The prayer ends with a special plea for the king: 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Trinity and one indivisible Godhead, fortify Levon, King of All Armenians, crowned by Christ, together with his children, against the enemies of the cross of Christ, our God.' By depicting the chalice with the Christ Child (Greek: *amos* or *melismos*), the artist is emphasising the real presence of Christ at the most sacred moment of the Eucharist. Standing behind the king and holding his crown is Baron Vasak who held the title of coronant (*tagapah*).

The features of the crown-bearer accord very closely with those of Baron Vasak represented on the thirteenth-century loose leaf in the Adolphe Stoclet collection and in the Gospels sponsored by Vasak (Jerusalem, St James MS no. 2568, c. 1270). The artistic licence taken in allowing the figure of Vasak to break through the frame is characteristic also of the artist of these latter Gospels. The portrait of King Levon closely corresponds to that in the Queen Keran Gospels of 1271–73 (Jerusalem, St James, MS no. 2563; Narkiss 1980, figs 77–83).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 295

### Four Gospels with a serpent curled around a trunk, folio 218r

Sis in the Kingdom of Armenian Cilicia, 1217  
Oriental paper, 25.9 × 19 cm; 286 folios

The Syndes of Cambridge University Library, Ms. Add. 2180  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Casey 1990; Chikobava 1979, vol. 2, pl. 148; Nersessian forthcoming

The four Gospels are written in classical Armenian in *bolorgir* script in 1217 by the scribe Yohannes, pupil of 'Grigor the incomparable scribe'. The work was done in Sis in the cathedral dedicated to St Marine for the 'most worthy and holy *vardapet* Vardan'. The serpent coiled around a trunk on fol. 224a is an example of how this manuscript illumination works, with motifs related to the text instead of full-page miniatures: a ciborium crowned with a cross represents the

temple of Jerusalem whose destruction is prophesied (Luke xxi, 5; a double cross raised above two cornucopia recalls the Crucifixion [John xix, 17–20]; a fish in a chalice appears alongside the account of Christ's breakfast when he revealed himself to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias [John xxi, 15]). The reference to the serpent is that Yohannes has transformed into a genre scene the literal interpretation of the accompanying text (John iii, 14): 'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up'; he has represented a serpent coiled around the trunk of a tree and attacking the small birds in their nest. The image recalls the Byzantine Gospels of Paris (gr. 74), in which Christ points to the serpent raised on a column.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 296

### T'OROS ROSLIN (fl. 1256–68), possibly with a collaborator or assistant

### Gospel-book of T'oros the Priest, folio 109r

1652, with seventeenth-century binding  
Ink, paint and gold on parchment, 29.5 × 22 cm (20 × 13.6 cm), 410 folios + 2 flyleaves, one at the beginning and one at the end, each from earlier manuscripts

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W. 539  
PROVENANCE: copied at Hromklay by T'oros Roslin in 1260 for the priest T'oros, nephew of Catholicos Gomastan I (1221–67), presented by the priest T'oros to Ad-shaghun hermitage in 1266; by 1664, the manuscript was in the Monastery of the Holy Cross, Sebasteia, where it stayed until the monastery was destroyed in 1914; purchased by Henry Walters from Dikran Kelekian, Paris, 1929; the manuscript passed to Mrs Sarah Walters at her husband's death, and was given by her to the Walters Art Gallery (now the Walters Art Museum) in 1935  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Der Nersessian 1978, pp. 51–76; Evans 1994, pp. 77–8; New York 1994, no. 8, pp. 145, 150–51; Evans; London 2001, no. 126, pp. 225, 226 (V. Nersessian)

T'oros Roslin is the best-known Armenian painter of the medieval period, and was the most important scribe and illuminator working at Hromklay in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. Most of the ten books attributed to him were made for the Catholicos himself, and this one was made for T'oros the priest, the nephew of the Catholicos. Roslin is noted for his expansion of pictorial narrative, with miniatures of various sizes interspersed throughout the text and the margins, and this is the most densely illuminated of his works. Although Roslin is rightly recognised as an innovative illuminator, he was building on earlier traditions; in this manuscript his dependence on his teacher Yovhannes, and, ultimately, on innovations made at the scriptorium at Skewray half a century earlier, can be seen in the arrangement of the canon tables, the inclusion of the Evangelists' animal symbols at the Gospel openings and depictions of the Lamb of God (fols 147, 321r).

Crusaders and mendicant friars arriving in Cilicia in the thirteenth century brought new pictorial forms, and while Armenian illumination continued to be closely tied to the Byzantine tradition, Western contact left its mark in a number of details. In the Last Judgement

miniature (fol. 109r), the overall appearance of the scene, with the river of fire dividing the composition in two, is typically Byzantine, but the depiction of the foolish virgins, outside the left frame and unable to enter Paradise, was a popular motif in contemporary French painting. The Return of the Magi (fol. 19r) is iconographically unusual in the military retinue accompanying the Magi, but similar mounted soldiers, the brightly coloured legs of their horses overlapping in rhythmic patterns, were commonly depicted in French manuscripts of the period, such as the Morgan Picture Bible (Morgan Library, New York, MS M.638).

KATHRYN GERRY

## 297

### Manuscript with donor before the Madonna della Misericordia

Sis, Cilicia, 1274

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Purchased in 1998 with the help of the Fellows Acquisition Fund, the Institute de Recherche sur les Miniatures Arméniennes, the Monastère Simonne Foundation, the L.W. Frohlich Charitable Trust in memory of L.W. Frohlich and Thomas R. Burns, in recognition of their interest in and contributions to the arts of the written word, the Happy Kerkorian Fund, Kaloust P. and Emma Sogesian, Antrany and Varenne Sarkisian, and an anonymous donor, in memory of Sirarpie Der Nersessian. Acq. no. 98.1.111  
PROVENANCE: In 1958 in Brussels, Feron-Stoclet Collection, purchased by the Pierpont Morgan Library in 1998  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Der Nersessian 1978, Der Nersessian 1993, pp. 150–76; fig. 64b; Mathews 1998, pp. 148–70, fig. 58; Mathews 1998–2000; Evans 2000, pp. 231–2, fig. 15.5; Derbes and Net 2004, p. 460; New York 2004, no. 98, pp. 60–1 (H.C. Evans); Murrells 2007, no. 3.0, p. 95 (C. Murrells and A. Ousmanian)

Formerly known as the Feron-Stoclet leaf, this folio with the donor's portrait was purchased by the Pierpont Morgan Library in 1998 to join the Marshal Oshin's Gospels from which it was taken (cat. 298). The partly preserved inscription, which matches the data from the colophon of the latter, enabled this attribution by Sirarpie Der Nersessian (1970) and is generally accepted. The leaf shows the Enthroned Virgin with the Christ Child spreading her mantle to shelter Oshin and his children kneeling before her. The bishop, whose elongated figure stands out in the background, introduces the donor; his nimbus and garment, ornamented with French-borrowed fleur-de-lis, point to a royal origin and enable him to be identified as Archbishop John, half-brother of Het'um I and the uncle of King Leo II.

The composition shares some iconographic features with the portrait of Prince Vasak with his children (Armenian Patriarchate, Jerusalem, MS 2568, fol. 328), in which the Madonna della Misericordia leads the kneeling donors towards the Enthroned Pantokrator. These two manuscripts produced by the same workshop at the same time raise the question of the introduction of the Madonna della Misericordia in the Christian East, as they offer the earliest dated examples and are among the earliest pieces of evidence for this iconographic type of the Virgin, preceding even the Madonna of the Franciscans painted by Duccio around 1280.



The Madonna della Misericordia originated in Italy in the first half of the thirteenth century and was quickly appropriated by the mendicant orders who brought this iconography to the Eastern Mediterranean, as indicated by the Carmelite's Virgin form St Cassianos in Cyprus. Rather than a specific connection between the Madonna della Misericordia and the Franciscans (Evans 2001, p.251), this iconography seems to have had a significant impact among Christians of different confessions in Cyprus and Cilicia (Carr 1995b, p.348). The frequent representation of that iconography of the Virgin in headpieces of legal documents, mainly in charters of confraternities (Vignola 1999), suggests that the formula efficiently expressed collective piety.

IOANNA RAPTI

## 298

### Marshal Oshin's Gospels

Sis, Cilicia, 1274  
Parchment, 29 × 21.2 cm; 320 folios

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Purchased in 1908, acc. no. no. 734. Provenance: bought by Father T. Balan in Genoa, Cappadocia, 1890; sold in 1900, purchased by J. P. Morgan from Mrs J. D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1908. SELECTED REFERENCES: Der Nersessian 1970, Saragiu 1976, pp. 58–59; Der Nersessian 1975, vol. 1, pp. 93, 102–3, 105–6, 114, vol. 2, figs 418, 504–5, 507; Matthews 1998, pp. 168–70, fig. 28; Soucek 1998, pp. 116–19, fig. 36; Merian 1998–2000, New York 1999, no. 64, pp. 193–4, pl. 15; H. C. Evans, New York 2004, no. 300, pp. 60–1; H. C. Evans, *Manuscripts* 2007, no. 114, p. 38 (C. Maudslayi).

Although preserved in good condition, this manuscript has suffered losses, especially from the initial quire of the canon tables and its portraits of the Evangelists. It contains the letter of Eusebios (fols 1v–2), a pair of canon tables (fols 4r–5), the dedicatory pages (fols 6v–7), the portrait of John dictating to Prochoros (fols 6v–7) and a series of ornate letters introducing the readings throughout the book. This is one of the most lavish works to have been produced by a scriptorium related to the court of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, which developed after the accession of King Leo II (1270–89); unlike most of the manuscripts of this group, Marshal Oshin's Gospel-book is dated by the scribal colophon which states that it was produced in the capital Sis.

Oshin, whose title reflects the use of Frankish terms among Armenian aristocracy, was the uncle of Leo's wife, Queen Keran. Oshin's Gospels present close connections with those ordered by Queen Keran in 1272 (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, ms 2563). The scribe Konstantin is most probably the same, while the illuminations of both manuscripts share a taste for de luxe gilded ornaments and brilliant enamelled-like colours.

The dedicatory pages record, like a colophon, the prayer for the memory of the donor and his relatives, alive and dead: the text is magnified by its metrical composition as well as by the monumental display within symmetrical architectural settings. Such dedicatory pages, displayed at the end of the preliminary quire

after the model of the canon tables are a feature of Cilician aristocratic manuscripts, first experienced in the scriptorium of Hromkla on the Euphrates, the See of the Armenian Catholics. The decoration of Oshin's dedicatory pages is characteristic of the courtly elegance of the manuscript and the visual syncretism of the workshop: in addition to traditional spandrels, birds and fighting beasts, the polylobed arch, probably of Islamic origin (Soucek 1998), houses a double-bodied harpy, who may come from Romanesque sculpture (Leclercq-Marx 1997, p.202).

IOANNA RAPTI

## 299

### Four Gospels with the Virgin and Child and donor and Mary Magdalene, folio 257

Village of Shiklak in the region of Tayk, in the Church of St Sargis, 8 September 1313  
Paper, written in large *bolger* script; 259 folios; 32 × 23 cm

The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, ms. no. Arm. 10. SELECTED REFERENCES: Tallbot-Rice 1960–61, Der Nersessian 1973, Aramian-Pakourian 1991, Labov 1991, Vryonis 1992, London 2001, pp. 375–4, London 2007, no. 110, p. 107.

The scribe, Yovhannes the priest, states that he completed the copying of his manuscript on 8 September 1313 during the reign of King Oshin (1307–20) and seeks prayers for the sponsor of the manuscript, Lady T'amam khathoun, whose portrait is on folio 9a, standing next to the Enthroned Virgin Mary and accompanied by Mary Magdalene. The inscription above her head contains her name and the legend next to her shoulder states 'she [had] this Gospel made'.

Some time between 1313 and 1317, the manuscript was 'rescued from captivity for 10 florins by the Armeno-Georgian aristocratic family of the Vkhikatsi of the Bagradit dynasty, who at the end of the tenth century had settled in Tayk (modern Erzerum). The Armenian and the Georgian churches did not endorse the decision of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. In 608 or 609 the Armenian Church broke with the Georgian Church and excommunicated the formerly Miaphysite Catholicos Koriwn I, for his adoption of the Chalcedonian doctrine. The overwhelming majority of Armenians entering imperial society, primarily in the tenth to twelfth centuries, when they formed a significant portion of the ruling class, had adopted the Chalcedonian profession of faith. However, although they had adopted the Greek faith, there were some among them who retained their ethnic memory and continued to use Armenian as their language and support their ethnic heritage among them 'leaving aside as self-evident the cases emperors (Leo V, Romanos I, Lekapenos, John I Tzimiskes, or Basil I) or imperial ecclesiastical figures Michael II, Kourkouas Oxeitas (1143–46), and individuals

like Eustathios Boilas (1059) and *Prolos* of the Grand Lavra Theotiktos (1035) and Gregory Pakourianos (1086)' (Vryonis 1992).

The unique features of this exceptional manuscript are that the entire text of the Gospels is in classical Armenian, the illuminations have inscriptions in Georgian, and the saints depicted in the miniatures are those representing the Church before the schism of 451.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 300

### Miniature with St Luke and Theophilus, folio 37

Monastery of Gner (?), Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, thirteenth century  
Parchment, 26 × 17 cm

lent by the Studies of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, McClean 99.201.38. SELECTED REFERENCES: James 1991, Kurz 1964, London 2001, no. 110, pp. 190–1.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

St Luke is seated with his right hand stretched to receive the letter inscribed with the words 'And behold! Jesus commandeth'. He holds his Gospel between the folds of his cloak and feet resting on a stool studded with precious stones. The initial words of the Gospel just visible are inscribed on the open codex in two columns and his name 'Sourb Ghoukas' above his head in large capital letters. The contrasting costumes worn by the two principal figures emphasise their different social status. St Luke is wearing a simple cloak and sandals, while 'the most excellent Theophilus' (St Luke I, 2) wears a red mantle with hems studded with jewels, crimson shoes and stockings and accompanied by a servant. In accordance with the Armenian Synaxary 'St Luke wrote the Holy Gospel, which is called after him, for a Roman prince named Theophilus'. Similar imagery is found in the following Armenian manuscripts: Jerusalem Nr. 2563 (dated 1272); Ercvan, Mat. Mss Nrs. 9422 (thirteenth century) and Nr. 7742 (dated 1347).

'The miniature is so purely Byzantine in style, that one could easily believe it to be the work of a Greek artist, were it not for the inscription in Armenian. The deep colours, and the way the bodies are modelled with sure brush-strokes, show a remarkable resemblance to Byzantine court works of the tenth century' (Kurz 1964, p.275), although the far-reaching differences noted by Otto Kurz render precise dating 'impossible until a close and dated parallel can be found'. At the moment this 'remarkable miniature remains isolated' (Kurz 1964, p.275; Der Nersessian 1993, p.92).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 301

### Four Gospels with Christ Blessing, folio 69v–70r

Cilicia, 1239  
Paper, 111 × 230 + 111, folios, 23 × 12 cm

The Bible Society and the Syndicate of Cambridge University Library, 1907. SELECTED REFERENCES: Nersessian 1972, London 2001, Nersessian forthcoming.

The full-page portrait (folio 7b) of Christ blessing shows him sitting on a cushion with a red book in his left hand. The symbols of the Evangelists are below, almost as supporters. The inscription in large letters around Christ's figure spells, above, T[ε]R A[σ]tous[DS] (Lord God) and, below, Y[η]sou[ε]s K[ρί]sto[ε]s (Jesus Christ). Above the cushion in small letters are the terms Manuel (left) and Mesai (right) [Manuel and Messiah]. The text in classical Armenian is written in regular *bolger* script. The four Gospels were copied by the scribe Partagh, son of the priest Nahapet in 1239. The manuscript was renewed and rebound by Step'annos, as a memorial 'to his immature son Basil and spiritual father and master Simeon' in 1427.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 302

### A Miracle of St Menas

Nubia, 1053  
Parchment, 15.5 × 10 cm; 18 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 6805. PROVENANCE: found in a stone coffin buried in the mountains of Edfu in Upper Egypt, and purchased by the Trustees of the British Museum, 1868. SELECTED REFERENCES: Hyverius 1888, plates 16, 17; Budge 1909, Dahom 1911, pp. 166–7, London 1978, no. 44, pl. 2; Wiesbaden 1996, no. 239, p. 340; Barcelona 2003, no. 241, p. 366; Paris 2004, nos 5–6, p. 40; London 2007, p. 206.

St Menas (fol. 10a) is on horseback and wears a tunic, belt, and cloak, parts of which are decorated with a braided bordering, and holds in his right hand a long spear, whose tip is turned towards the ground. It is significant to note that the end of the spear-shaft is not in the form of a cross, as is usually the case in Coptic pictures of military saints on horseback, e.g. those of St Theodore and St Victor (Hyverius 1888, pls 16 and 17). Above his head are three 'crowns of light incorruptible, like those of the Holy Trinity' (Book of Acts of Saints, ms Or. 689, fol. 73b ff.), the one in the centre being surmounted by a Coptic cross. To the right, at the foot of the page, is the figure of a bearded man grasping the left forefoot of the saint's horse with his right hand. The popularity of Menas is attested by the saint's images preserved in stone and ivory as well as on pilgrim flasks, made near the sanctuary, but found all round the Mediterranean: from Alexandria to the Upper Nile valley, from Egypt to Greece.

The kingdom of Nubia was converted to Christianity between 530 and 580 through sponsored missions from Byzantium during the reign of Justinian I (527–65), but the Arab invasions in the seventh century isolated Nubia from Byzantium, although Greek continued to be used in inscriptions and Byzantine influences on church art persisted. Christian Nubia remained independent until 1343. The book has the Life of St Mena, or Minas (faithful and blessed), and a

sermon on the Canons of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325). The language is considered to be one of the native African dialects used by the Nubian Christians of the northern Sudan. 'The manuscript is in fact one of the very few remains of the literature of the Church of Nubia, and linguistically is of the greatest value' (Budge 1909, p.1).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 303

### The Four Gospels with title page of St Matthew's Gospel, folio 116v–117r

Nubia, 1308  
Paper, 26.5 × 19.7 cm; 166 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 6825. SELECTED REFERENCES: Crum 1905, no. 736, pp. 373–4; Wiesbaden 1996, no. 239, p. 340.

The Gospels are preceded by the Eusebian Canon tables and the title pages of the Gospels are blank rectangles coloured yellow instead of the gilded illustrations of the earlier manuscripts. The Arab conquest of Egypt in 642 seems a fairly innocuous event in Christian sources but it resulted in the gradual disappearance of Greek as a spoken and even as a liturgical language, and the substitution of the Bohairic dialect of Coptic as the liturgical language during the Patriarchate of Gabriel II (1132–45) finally put an end to the Byzantine efforts to control the Church and opened a new era in the history of the Egyptian Church. By the eleventh century the Copts became bilingual and finally Arabic-speaking, retaining Bohairic for Scriptures and service books, accompanied by Arabic translation. In this bilingual Bohairic-Arabic copy of the Four Gospels, the Arabic is presented in a parallel column to the right of the Coptic text representing the opening page of St Matthew's Gospel (folio 8).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 304

### Gospel lectionary with the Holy Women at the Sepulchre and Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene, folio 160

Syria or Mesopotamia, around 1220  
Tempera on paper; bold estrangelo script, 47 × 36 cm; 264 folios

The British Library, London, Add. 2770. SELECTED REFERENCES: Buchthal 1940, Buchthal and Kurz 1948, no. 39, pp. 13–14; Leroy 1964, p. 313; London 1978, no. 29, pl. II, pp. 23–31; New York 1991, no. 254, p. 385; London 2001, no. 132, p. 200; London 2007, no. 125.

An inscription in gold letters on blue at the end of the Easter Lection (fol. 185) records that the manuscript was copied during the prelate of Mar (abbot) Iwannis, 'patriarch of all the universe' (1208–20), and Mar Ignatios, katolikos of the East (1216–22). No location is indicated, but the manuscript is almost a twin of a lectionary in the Vatican (Syr. 559) completed on 2 May 1220 in

the Monastery of Mar Mattei, near Mosul in northern Mesopotamia.

This opening shows two events, Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene and the Holy Women's visit to the tomb, combined in a single composition. The inscription in the picture reads 'Our Lord Jesus Christ appears to the women' and 'The angel on the tomb'. According to Hugo Buchthal, the explanation for the composite style of this manuscript is that, as early as 1180, the Arabs in Syria appropriated the Byzantine style of form, a pictorial tradition that was Mediterranean in character, though Islamic in its outward appearance: 'Byzantine illustration treated in the Arab style shows the adaptability of Byzantine imagery to local tastes and styles' (Buchthal 1940, Leroy 1964).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 305

### A book of homilies, folio 10

Ihrit el-Gharbiya, Fayum, south of Cairo, 989–90  
Parchment, 37 × 27.5 cm; 28 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 6918. SELECTED REFERENCES: De Rudder 1909, Layton 1987, no. 12, pp. 174–6; Wiesbaden 1996, no. 230, London 2007, p. 209.

The manuscript comprises several distinct texts, which at some time were secondarily united and bound in their present order. All parts are by the same scribe and written in identical style: (1) The Repose of St John the Evangelist; (2) Gregory of Nazianzos, Homily on the Devil and St Michael Archangel; (3) Epiphanies of Salamis, On the Virgin Mary; and (4) Cyril of Alexandria, On the Virgin Mary.

In fol. 1v, the central figures in the hagiographical texts assembled are St John and the Virgin Mary. St John is represented standing holding a book, probably his Gospel, and the Virgin is suckling the Christ Child. Although the Virgin holds her breast with her hand, her index finger is extended pointing to the Child, who is seated frontally, and she is seated on a throne. This imagery may be a modification of the standard Byzantine imagery of the Virgin as Hodegetria (one who shows the way), in which the Virgin points to the Child as the Messiah, shown as a small adult rather than an infant. Philotheos the deacon, copyist and artist, records in the colophon placed below the frontispiece that the manuscript was copied in Ihrit el-Gharbiya, Fayum, south of Cairo, between 29 August 989 and 28 August 990.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

## 306

### Fragments of a dish

Syria, end of thirteenth–first half of fourteenth century  
Yellowish paste, white slip, painted with blue, black, turquoise.



and brown under transparent greenish glaze, maximum length 31 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1079.  
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Cairo 1922, pl. 121; Athens 1980, no. 137, pp. 40–1; Philon 1983, Paris 2000a, no. 102, 3, p. 108; A. Ballian.

The fragments were part of a large dish painted with the Deposition from the Cross. An additional fragment in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo partly shows the Virgin embracing her son's body with great emotion and laying her face against his. This was a popular image of sorrow in Byzantium. The two Marys on the dish are shown with the emotional gestures normally associated with the Crucifixion scene.

While the iconography is closely associated with Byzantine models, the overall style demonstrates the Islamic cultural environment of Eastern Christianity. The facial features with the slanting eyes are found in thirteenth-century Muslim, Syriac and Coptic manuscripts, as well as on Syrian underglazed pottery, where the dotted halos and the profile of the dish are also encountered. But the chronological frame is provided by the influence of Il-Khanid pottery, evident in the raised and dotted white leaves on the background, the decorative lotus panelling of the exterior and the Chinese cloud scrolls surrounding the hovering angels. It is most likely that the strange, non-Christian depiction of St John shown with dishevelled hair, resembling the mourners on the Great Mongol Shah-Namēh, is of the same Mongol provenance.

Christian subjects are depicted on thirteenth-century inlaid metalwork and glass and evoke the vitality of Christian communities in the Middle East during the Late Ayyubid and Early Mamluk periods. The few inscribed pieces show that they were commissioned by Muslim patrons. In the case of the Deposition dish a Christian patronage is more likely. The dish may have been either used for the Eucharist, as a paten in which the bread was held, or associated with a special ceremony of a monastery or a church.

ANNA BALLIAN

### 307

Door panels from the Church of the Virgin, al-Mu'allāqa, Old Cairo

c.1300  
Cedarwood, approximately 31 × 13.1 × 2.5 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, MA 1878, 1203–1210.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hunt 1989; Hamm 1996, no. 102 a–d, pp. 140–1; E. Essi; Hunt 2000, p. 41, fig. 5; Paris 2000a, no. 104, pp. 176–7; C. Kozminski; New York 2004, no. 106, pp. 237–4 with fig. 216; and individual, 7–10 (T. K. Thomas); Hunt 2007, pp. 56–64 with figs 7–9; Hunt forthcoming.

These ten panels can be reconstructed as the doors formerly opening into the baptismal chapel of the 'Hanging' Coptic church, al-Mu'allāqa, in Old Cairo, located in the southern turret of the former Roman fortress of Babylon (Qasr al-Sham). These were probably completed for the refurbishment of the church from 1301 to 1302,

following a Byzantine embassy to Cairo. Traces of gesso indicate that the panels were originally gilded, and quite possibly painted, making a link with templon icons.

Their programme of salvation can be deduced from a description of 1872. The panels are paired vertically and horizontally. Cross panels at the top symbolise Christ's triumph over death through the Crucifixion. Below, on the right, the Baptism heads the feast scenes, above the Annunciation and opposite the Nativity/Adoration. The Entry into Jerusalem and the Ascension occupy the next register. Pentecost and the Anastasis (Harrowing of Hell), the Resurrection image of Easter, are at the bottom. Through Baptism the believer achieves salvation, as do Christ's ancestors in the Anastasis. The broken doors of Hell, trampled by Christ, are juxtaposed with the pristine sanctuary gates of Paradise in the Pentecost scene opposite, immediately below Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, the eternal city.

The interaction of different Eastern Christian groups, under Islamic Mamluk rule, explains several elements of the doors. Similar spiky leaves appear on Sultan Lagin's pulpit in the mosque of Ibn Tulun of 1296. The rich narrative detail derives from apocryphal sources in Coptic, Syriac and Armenian. Certain features of the Nativity/Adoration, including the oriental headgear of the Magi, relate to the same scene on a templon screen at Sinai attributable to a Syrian Melkite (Byzantine Orthodox) artist, while the Anastasis relates to an icon at Sinai. The book held by the Virgin of the Annunciation is Western in origin, while the fur tunic of John the Baptist in the Baptism, and the tonsure of an Apostle in the Ascension, are Byzantine.

LUCY-ANNE HUNT

### 308

Casket

Norman Sicily, twelfth century  
Ivory, painted and gilded, gilt copper hinges, 9 × 11.2 × 7.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1057.  
PROVENANCE: acquired in Paris, 1923.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Cui 1999, no. 5; Ballian 2000, no. 131, p. 112.

This rectangular casket with a pyramidal truncated lid decorated with painted and gilded ornamentation is constructed from thin ivory plaques that are secured together by ivory pegs and gilt-copper mounts. Medallions with an arabesque design or peacock birds on a background of red dots, reminiscent of metalwork punched decoration, are the main decorative theme. The rest of the surface features pairs of birds and small circular motifs scattered throughout. The frieze of the lid bears an Arabic inscription written in a poor cursive script. The content of the inscription is probably benedictory, the first word being 'glory' and the second perhaps 'constant'. This conforms to the standard

form of inscriptions that prevailed on works of art of the period, expressing general wishes and well-being to anonymous owners.

The casket belongs to a group of about 200 such objects, of various sizes, that are characteristic of ivory production attributed to Norman Sicily of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They are distinguished by a relative homogeneity in decoration and subject-matter, which also includes Christian iconography, affiliated however to the Fatimid style. Such caskets were probably used to store jewellery and other precious objects and a number of these ended up in European church treasuries, along with other works of Islamic art that were regarded as precious in the medieval period.

Sicily remained under Muslim rule for almost two centuries – from the ninth until the end of the eleventh century. When the Christians regained power over the island under the Norman kings, cultural and artistic production there was an amalgamation of Islamic art with the Christian artistic heritage of South Italy and Romanesque France as well as Byzantium. Works of art influenced by the Islamic aesthetic, and in particular by Fatimid art, continued to be produced throughout the twelfth century, as is attested by the existence of a variety of examples, from portable objects such as this, to such monumental works of art as the painted ceiling of the Capella Palatina in Palermo.

MINA MORAITOU

### 309

Candlestick

Konya, second half of thirteenth century  
Brass, cast, engraved and inlaid with silver, 20.1 × 19.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1303.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Rice 1954, pp. 1–39, pl. 8, fig. F; Athens 1980, no. 135, p. 30; Ballian 2000, p. 94, fig. 100.

The candlestick has a distinctive concave body and socket. The decoration consists of several epigraphic bands with benedictory inscriptions, written in a variety of scripts, including an animated cursive script on the neck and a large figural frieze on the body. It contains four roundels alternating with cartouches and linked by eight-lobed rosettes, all set on a dense arabesque background. The cartouches enclose birds of prey attacking birds, while the roundels contain individual figures, part of an entertainment scene: a seated figure raising a drinking cup, two seated musicians, one playing a small lute, the other a large harp, and, finally, a standing figure dancing and holding clappers in his hands.

The candlestick belongs to a group of more than 50 known pieces of similar dimensions and shape; they are distinguished by their wide variety of figural decoration that draws freely from Byzantine, Armenian, Georgian, Crusader or Western European sources (Venice 1993, nos 129–

31, pp. 241–4 [R. Ward]). Several iconographic and epigraphic features of the Benaki candlestick are shared with a candlestick in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and another in the Los Angeles County Museum, but their place of manufacture is not known. The mixing of styles and the more typical Islamic repertoire of courtly entertainment characterises the art of the Seljuqs of Rum. Two candlesticks carrying Mevlevi verses, and thus associated with Konya (the Byzantine Iconium), make the attribution of at least some of the candlesticks to the capital of the Sultanate plausible (Melikian-Chirvani 1987).

All candlesticks of this group that can be traced originate from Turkey and the majority of the pieces are still preserved there. Two candlesticks in the Athonite monasteries of St Paul and Docheiariou are exceptions (Thessaloniki 1997c, no. 9.28, pp. 322–3 [A. Ballian]). It is not known, however, how they were acquired. The St Paul candlestick serves as a base for a Venetian cross and was acquired after the refoundation of the monastery in the 1380s. There is an interesting clue to explain how the candlestick came to be in the Monastery of Docheiariou. The monks owned a boat and travelled for commercial reasons to the ports of Africa and to Constantinople, where they may have acquired the candlestick.

ANNA BALLIAN

### 310

Lustre-painted bowl with giraffe

Egypt, late tenth–early eleventh century  
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 24 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1129.  
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt, 1922.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Eastinghouse 1936, p. 266; Philon 1980, fig. 454, p. 200; Paris 1998, no. 36, p. 111; Meinecke-Berg 1999, pp. 354–56, fig. 69; Ballian 2000, no. 52, p. 97.

This ceramic bowl, which has been restored and repainted in areas, has a monochrome lustre decoration over an opaque glaze. The central theme is a giraffe shown between its groom and a tree, on a background filled with contour panels with the design known as 'peacock's eye'. The figure of the groom is shown in motion, as if walking out of the rim and looking backwards while holding the animal on a leash. He wears a short tunic, a turban on his head and boots on his feet while tiraz bands decorate his arms and headress. The giraffe wears a saddle decorated with a palmette scroll and is portrayed following the groom. The tree is curved and skilfully fills the space behind the animal while following the shape of the bowl. The reverse displays concentric circles and loosely applied strokes.

An inscribed fragmentary bowl with the name of the artist – 'the work of Muslim (ibn al-Dahhan)' – is conserved in Cairo and displays the same scene but in a double mirror image (Meinecke-Berg 1999, p. 354, fig. 11). The similarity

in the design of the two bowls is striking, leading to the assumption that the Benaki bowl was created by the same artist. The same signature appears on a dish fragment in the Benaki Museum, Athens, with additional information which indicates that the artist lived during the time of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (996–1021) (Philon 1980, no. 404, p. 198), thereby dating this bowl to the same period.

Giraffes were regarded as exotic and prestigious animals and are frequently mentioned in medieval texts. Customarily, they were brought out to impress either caliphs on festival celebrations or ambassadors. On other occasions they were sent as gifts to neighbouring courts, as the giraffe and the elephant were to Constantine IX Monomachos by al-Mustansir in 1053 (Ševčenko 2002, p. 77).

MINA MORAITOU

### 311

Bowl with leopard and trainer

Egypt, eleventh century  
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 24.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1129.  
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt, 1922.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Eastinghouse 1936, p. 266; Philon 1980, fig. 455, p. 201; Baer 1999; Meinecke-Berg 1999, fig. 66, p. 352; Paris 2000a, no. 37, p. 112; Ballian 2000, no. 51, p. 97.

This fragmentary bowl, which has been restored and repainted in areas, is decorated with lustre painting over an opaque white glaze. The inside of the bowl is treated as a painting surface with no divisions. Although the central part of the bowl is missing, it is possible to suggest, from surviving imagery, that it contained a leopard accompanied by its trainer, probably an old man. The leopard is shown sitting on its back legs while the man kneels. The man appears to be bald, and wears a belted tunic with tiraz bands and boots. A swirling palmette tree is used effectively to create a background for the scene. The reverse is decorated with lustre circles and strokes.

The task of reconstructing the design was made easier by basing it on other works of art from the Fatimid period with which it shared certain similarities. For example, it is possible to relate the figure of the leopard to that carved on the rock-crystal ewer inscribed with the name of the Caliph al-Aziz (975–996) that is today kept in the Treasury of San Marco, Venice (Venice 1993, no. 61, p. 153). The animal appears to be standing in a similar posture and has its tail curled around its hind leg. Furthermore, an image of a man carrying a basket on a fragmentary dish in the Keir Collection (Richmond, Surrey) displays similar facial features and clothing details to the trainer (Watson 1988, no. C7, pp. 149–50).

This bowl belongs to a group of ceramic wares representing scenes of everyday life at court. During the Fatimid period, leopards were

regarded as rare and exotic creatures. They were objects of admiration at the caliph's court and were used in the royal hunt. As they evoke an image of authority and prestige, they may have been portrayed only on luxury items.

MINA MORAITOU

### 312

Lustre-painted bowl with cup-bearer

Egypt, eleventh century  
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 28 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 108.  
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt in 1923.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Philon 1980, fig. 454, p. 200; Paris 1998, no. 36, p. 111; Meinecke-Berg 1999, p. 352, fig. 5; Rouss 2002, no. 135, p. 184; Ballian 2000, no. 54, p. 97.

This fragmentary ceramic bowl, which has been restored and repainted in areas, has monochrome lustre decoration over an opaque glaze. It is decorated with a seated barefooted figure on a background ornamented with a dense palmette scroll. The figure, shown in three-quarter view, has long hair kept together by a headband, and holds a conical cup in one hand. He is dressed in an elaborate tunic decorated with cross motifs and large palmettes; the sleeves bear schematised tiraz bands. The reverse of the bowl is painted with lustre circles and strokes. Inside the footring are faint traces of the artist's signature, probably the name Tabīb.

This popular theme is the subject of two lustre dishes in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, that display the cup-bearer figure sitting cross-legged. One is signed with the artist's name, Ja'far, and displays a figure with long braids holding two cups and clad in a dress decorated with large palmettes rendered in a stylised manner (Grube and Johns 2005, no. 14.6, p. 115). In comparison, the other Cairo bowl, which is unsigned, shows a cup-bearer with similar features on a less crowded background. The treatment of the clothing is closer to the Benaki bowl in that it exhibits an attempt to achieve a realistic representation in the costume which follows to some extent the form of the body underneath (Paris 1998, no. 35, p. 111).

The cup-bearer is part of the iconography of court figures engaged in everyday activities such as drinking, playing music, dancing and hunting wild animals. A recurrent theme in the Fatimid artistic tradition, it is found not only in ceramics but also in woodwork, ivory, textiles and painting. This iconographic cycle is particularly popular during this period when artists show an interest in the human form and, although they are continuing the Abbasid painting tradition, obtain a higher degree of naturalism reminiscent of Late Antique prototypes.

MINA MORAITOU



## 9 The Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai

### 313 Icon with Christ with SS. Sergios and Bacchos

Constantinople, sixth or seventh century  
Encaustic and gold on pine, 28.5 × 41.8 cm

The Bolshoi and Varvara Khramenko Museum of Arts, Kiev, inv. no. 11.  
PROVENANCE: Taken by Archimandrite Porphyry Uspenskiy from the Monastery of St Catherine, Mount Sinai, to Kiev in the mid-nineteenth century.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Weitzmann 1976, pp. 28–30; Fowden 1999, Los Angeles 2006, no. 127 (T. F. Mathews).

Sergios and Bacchos are shown as very youthful saints each wearing a gold chiton with a carmine clavus and a white chlamys held in place with a gold clasp. They have large ornamental gold torques (maniakia) around their necks, signs of their officer rank in the army. They hold martyrs' crosses because they were executed in Syria in around 300 after refusing as Christians to sacrifice to Zeus. Both saints were very popular in the east as healers and defenders: Justinian and Theodora founded a monastery and church in their honour at Constantinople, their cult centre was at the pilgrimage city of Sergiopolis (Rusafa) in the desert north of Palmyra, and the treasure of Kaper Koraon, a village in Syria with a church dedicated to St Sergios, might have included the Antioch Chalice (cat. 19).

The medium of the painting is encaustic on wood; the panel has cracked horizontally and the paint surface has been retouched in several places (the saints' names were added later). The thick impasto style of the painting is very similar to one of the early encaustic icons at Sinai with the Virgin and Child, angels and two military saints (Mathews, in Los Angeles 2006). The precise dating of this Virgin panel is a matter of debate, although there is agreement that the style belongs before iconoclasm and in the sixth or seventh century. One speculative argument is that Justinian, as the founder of the present monastery between 550 and 565, sent a set of icons to adorn it. This is the basis for dating several icons, including this one, to the sixth century and for suggesting them to be the work of the artists of Constantinople. Others suggest a seventh-century date for this panel and a possible provenance in one of the cult centres.

ROBIN CORMACK

### 314 Icon with the Virgin and Child

Constantinople, sixth century  
Encaustic and gold on larch, 35.4 × 20.6 cm

The Bolshoi and Varvara Khramenko Museum of Arts, Kiev, inv. no. 112.  
PROVENANCE: Taken by Archimandrite Porphyry Uspenskiy from the Monastery of St Catherine, Mount Sinai, to Kiev in the mid-nineteenth century.  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Weitzmann 1976, no. 13; B. Athos 2000, no. 4, pp. 264–5 (R. Cormack).

The Virgin Mary holds Christ high on her shoulder, gripping his body tightly in her crossed arms. Both figures look to the left, although she is turned towards Christ; he holds out his right hand with an open palm. This is an unusual composition, and not, for example, the Hodegetria type that becomes so common after iconoclasm. The vertical gold stroke to the right of the Virgin's halo has been read as a fragment of Greek lettering that describes her as St Mary, a form known in the Early Byzantine period. Interpretation of the meaning of the composition is complicated by the fact that the icon has at some time in its history been cut and reshaped. About 4 cm are missing from the left side, perhaps more below, and the upper part has been altered to fit a Gothic-style frame. One interpretation is that the original icon was an Adoration of the Magi, now severely cut down, but that does not seem likely. Probably it was originally a devotion panel of the Virgin and Child that was adapted during the Crusader period, perhaps by Latin pilgrims, because of its venerable status in the monastery. The elaborate punched rosettes in the gold haloes may belong to this period of veneration. There are also some modern restorations.

The use of encaustic, and the stylistic connections with other early icons in the monastery that have been dated to the sixth or seventh century, are the basis for the suggested date in the sixth century and the attribution to Constantinople.

ROBIN CORMACK

### 315

#### Icon of St George and scenes of his life and miracles

Sinai (?), beginning of the thirteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 127 × 80.6 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1976–98, vol. 1, pl. 147, vol. 2, pp. 149–51; Weitzmann 1984a, pp. 98–9; Constantinides 1997; Sevchenko 1999, p. 151, fig. 6; Walter 2003, p. 137; New York 2004, no. 208, pp. 371–3 (N. P. Sevcenko).

The icon has a central representation of a standing St George dressed as a soldier and a frame with twenty scenes from the martyrdom and miracles of the saint. This number of scenes is the highest known in an icon of this type. The narrative starts on the upper-left corner with St George distributing his belongings to the poor and ends on the bottom right with the burial of the saint. There is an emphasis on his martyrdom as fifteen of the scenes illustrate events of it, such as the saint burned with torches, in the lime pit, scratched, on the wheel and decapitated by sword. This type of icon is called a vita or biographical icon and Sinai has the richest and earliest collection of such icons with Adorations especially

venerated in the monastery, as St Catherine (New York 2004, no. 201, pp. 341–3 [N. P. Sevcenko]) and Moses (Mouriki 1995).

We cannot be certain about the exact function or placement of these icons, but for the vita icon of St Catherine, there is evidence that it stood by the tomb of the saint inside the church at Sinai. It has been argued that vita icons are an invention of Byzantium in regions in the East Mediterranean with mixed cultures venerating the same saints but in different languages and literary traditions (Sevcenko 1999).

The donor of the icon is shown in miniature scale to the left of St George and an inscription above his head reads: ΑΓΙΕ ΤΟΥ Θ(ΕΟ)Υ ΒΟΗΘΙ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΝ ΔΟΥΛΟΝ ΙΣ(ΑΝΝΗΝ) Μ(ΟΝΑ)Χ(ΟΝ) Κ(ΑΙ) ΗΕΡΕΑΝ ΤΟΝ ΕΚ ΠΟΘΟΥ ΚΤΙCΑΝΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΚΙΝ ΗΚΟΝΑ ΤΟΝ ΗΒΕΡΟΝ (‘O saint of God, help your servant John, monk and priest, who with desire commissioned your image, the Georgian’).

There was a Georgian community of monks at Sinai at least from the eleventh century and maybe this icon was commissioned at Sinai by the Georgian monk and priest John. The back of the icon has the wavy black and red stripes which may indicate a production at Sinai.

MARIA VASSILAKI

### 316

#### Icon of the Prophet Moses before the Burning Bush and receiving the Tablets of the Law

Sinai (?), late twelfth–early thirteenth century  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 132.5 × 69.9 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1976–98, vol. 1, fig. 75, vol. 2, pp. 89–90; Weitzmann 1984a, pp. 102–06; Mouriki 1999, p. 110, fig. 64; Vassilopoulos 1999, nos 17–18, p. 202; St Petersburg and London 2000, no. 556, pp. 441–4 (V. Piatnitsky); Los Angeles 2006, no. 20, p. 193 (G. Pappalardo).

The Prophet Moses is receiving the tablets of law from the hand of God, which appears from a quadrant on the upper left corner. The Burning Bush is painted at the bottom-left corner of the icon. Moses is barefoot; his sandals lie on the green ground. This composition reflects the sixth-century mosaics above the conch of the apse of the monastery church, except that the artist has chosen to show Moses as a young man and not bearded. An inscription on the bottom frame of the icon reads: ΟCΙCΤΟΡΗCΕΝ ΩΘΕΟΠΙΤΑ ΚΟΝ ΤΥΠΙΟΝ ΑΓΓΕΙ CΤΕΦΑΝΟC ΑΥCΗΝ ΑΜΠΛΑΚΗΜΑCΤΩΝ (‘the person who painted your likeness, named Stephen, requests, O God-seer, release from his errors’). Next to it an inscription in Arabic translates as: ‘O you who have seen God, grant forgiveness to Stephanos who painted your virtues’. Above the Burning Bush a later inscription in Greek reads: ΜΗΝΗCΤΗΤΗΚ(Υ)ΡΙΕ ΤΗΝ ΨΥΧΗΝ ΜΑΝΟΥ/ΥΑ (‘Remember, Lord, the soul of Manuel’).

It has been proposed that Stephanos was both the painter and donor of this icon, though it has been also argued that he was the donor alone (Pappalardo in Los Angeles 2006, p. 193). The generally accepted dating of the icon in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century has been recently challenged (Pappalardo in Los Angeles 2006, p. 193).

It is believed that this icon was made for the Church of the Prophet Moses on the summit of the Horeb mountain (Vocotopoulos 1995, p. 204). It forms a pair with that of the Prophet Elijah (Los Angeles 2006, no. 28, p. 191 [G. Pappalardo]), presumably meant for the chapel built at the site of the cave at Mount Horeb, where the prophet took refuge. In the late sixteenth century the two icons were placed on either side of the entrance from the narthex into the nave of the monastery church (Los Angeles 2006, p. 193).

The rear side of the icon is decorated with wavy black and red stripes and this has been taken as an indicator trademark for icons produced at Sinai.

MARIA VASSILAKI

### 317

#### Iconostasis beam with the Great Feasts and Deisis

Sinai (?), around 1200  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 152.3 × 38.7 cm; 25.8 × 38.5 cm (Koimesis of the Virgin)

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai  
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1976–98, vol. 1, fig. 116–17, vol. 2, pp. 11–12; Weitzmann 1984a, pp. 75–80, figs 8–14; Mouriki 1999, p. 106–7, figs 3–23; Vassilopoulos 1999, nos 34–35, pp. 199–200; New York 1999, no. 496, pp. 372–379 (A. Wolf-Care).

This is the central part of a templon beam, which now survives in several pieces. This section painted on a single piece of wood, has the Deisis at the centre, the Transfiguration and Baptism of Christ on the left, the Raising of Lazarus and the Entry into Jerusalem on the right. The entire length of the full iconostasis suggests that it could have been made for the templon of the central nave of the monastery church at Sinai. It includes the twelve major church feasts (the Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation of Christ to the Temple, Baptism of Christ, Transfiguration, Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, Crucifixion, Anastasis, Ascension, Pentecost and Koimeis of the Virgin), two scenes from the infancy of the Virgin (the Birth and Presentation to the Temple) and the Deisis in the middle.

This section is the work of a painter with a distinctive style. He favours bright colours such as orange and blue and has an unusual technique of quick brush strokes. Landscape is far more important in his scenes than the architectural background, which is kept to the minimum. This ‘innovative’ style is mainly exhibited in this central fragment and the scenes of the Pentecost and the Koimesis of the Virgin.

This disparity between scenes led Weitzmann to suggest that three painters worked for the entire work. It is true that scenes, such as the Crucifixion and the Anastasis lack the daring approach to the soft modelling of figures and the use of bright colours, which is so conspicuous in scenes like the Raising of Lazarus. Perhaps therefore one can suggest that the painter of the central section was the master under whom painters of a workshop operated.

Sinai has preserved an impressive number of templon beams dating from the twelfth century onwards (Weitzmann 1984a, pp. 64–86, figs 1–17), which may have been executed in situ by accomplished painters working at Sinai but trained elsewhere.

MARIA VASSILAKI

### 318, 319, 320, 321

#### Deisis with St Peter, Archangel Michael, Archangel Gabriel, St Paul

Sinai (?), thirteenth century  
Tempera on wood, 105.7 × 71.1 cm (Peter); 105.5 × 75.5 cm (Michael); 105 × 75 cm (Gabriel); 104.3 × 69.8 cm (Paul)

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai  
SELECTED REFERENCES: St Petersburg and London 2000, no. 562, p. 250 (V. Piatnitsky); New York 2004, no. 495, pp. 384–5 (V. N. Marinis); Drandaki 2004, especially p. 38.

These four panels of similar size and style can be reconstructed as part of a set of Great Deisis icons from a sanctuary screen from the monastery at Sinai. What is lacking from the centre are the three icons of St John the Baptist, Christ and the Virgin Mary. The main church (the *katholikon*) and other chapels inside the precinct and on the mountains around all needed icons as the templon screen and iconostasis of the Orthodox church evolved, and in the various rooms of the monastery are the scattered component elements of many different screens. The *katholikon* of the monastery today has a massive screen made by the Cretan artist Jeremias in 1612. One question is whether these panels formed a set for one of the earlier periods of adornment of this church below the sixth-century mosaic of the Transfiguration, which has over the years been progressively obscured as the sanctuary has become more enclosed by icons.

Each of these icons has in common the use of a real gold-leaf ground (many large icons in the monastery economised by using coloured varnish over a cheaper metal to ‘fake’ a gold ground), and the figures share many similarities of colour scheme and style. The angels have gold (so-called chrysographia) in their garments, as do Peter and Paul. One distinctive feature of both angels are the hairbands and the large ornamental red ruby set in gold with four white pearls held by pins; this same design is found in the hair of the Archangel Gabriel in the sanctuary doors from (now) elsewhere in the monastery (cat. 322). This

opens the question of whether these icons all formed part of a relatively high screen (an early iconostasis) in the *katholikon*, erected at some time in the thirteenth century. If this controversial proposal is accepted, they would mark a turning point in the history of the Byzantine screen, as it developed from the templon with an epistyle and intercolumnar icons into the high iconostasis currently best known in Russian churches from the late fourteenth century.

ROBIN CORMACK

### 322

#### Sanctuary door with Annunciation

Sinai (?), thirteenth century  
Tempera on linen over wood, 120 × 34.3 cm and 118 × 32.2 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine's at Sinai, Chapel of the Five Martyrs of Sebaste  
SELECTED REFERENCES: St Petersburg and London 2000, no. 555, p. 276 (V. Piatnitsky).

These two leaves of a double door are one of the earliest surviving examples of Byzantine sanctuary ‘heavenly’ or ‘holy gates’. They have been shaved down slightly for secondary reuse at some date in the chapel of the Five Martyrs, having originally fitted into a slightly wider opening, but like all such doors they were always relatively narrow. Over the centuries the lower parts of the panels have been spotted by water, due to regular washing of the floor of the church.

The Annunciation (Ο ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙCΜΟC) is the standard scene for the doors of the sanctuary screen between the congregation and the altar (symbolically the barrier between heaven and earth in the church building). In this case Gabriel stands firmly in front of a low wall and faces the Virgin. He wears a green tunic and a pastel pink cloak, and his long curling hair is tied up with a band which has at its centre a large red ruby set in gold with four white pearls held by pins. The Mother of God stands spinning in front of a regal stool with a red cushion on which is thrown a white cloth. She is dressed also in green and has a purple maphorion. Her gesture is one of surprise, but the expression of her face is one of calm acceptance of the announcement of the coming birth of the son of God.

Piatnitsky, who was the first to publish these paintings (St Petersburg and London 2000), dated them to the late twelfth century. However, a slightly later date in the thirteenth century is possible, as is a connection with the icons from a Deisis group (cats 318, 319, 320, 321).

ROBIN CORMACK



Icon of the Heavenly Ladder  
of St John Klimakos

Constantinople or Sinai, late twelfth century.  
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with  
cloth and gesso, 41.1 x 29.1 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai  
EXISTING REFERENCES: Maaskala 1996, p. 102, fig. 21; Belting 1994, pp. 272–3,  
fig. 165; New York 1997, no. 247, pp. 271–7; K. Gernig, Los Angeles 2005, no. 48,  
pp. 244–7; B. Pentcheva; Cormack 2007a, pp. 18–20, fig. 11.

This is the earliest surviving icon depicting the Heavenly Ladder, which is the theme of a treatise written by St John Klimakos (of the Ladder) in the seventh century. John (c.579–650) was a monk at Sinai, who later became abbot of the monastery. His text is divided into 30 chapters, as was the age of Christ before his baptism. The text speaks of the vices that a monk has to avoid and of the virtues that he has to acquire in order to reach God.

A ladder with 30 rungs crosses the composition of the icon diagonally and unites earth with heaven. On top of the ladder is St John Klimakos, followed by the abbot of the monastery Antonios, who may have commissioned this icon. Their names are written in red majuscule letters on the golden background. Christ, half-length, appears from a quadrant, which represents heaven, and is blessing St John, who is reaching him. A long row of monks are following St John and Antonios, all looking up towards heaven. Those defeated by temptation are pulled down by black devils with the help of black chains. They will be punished in Hell. The mouth of Hell is at the bottom of the ladder and one of the monks is already half way inside it. Some monks at the bottom right are attending the scene and are raising their arms in prayer. Some angels at the upper left are also part of the narrative, as they have a vital role to play in the text of the Heavenly Ladder. Their haloes resemble spinning wheels, as they are polished to reflect light. This technique of burnishing is a characteristic of several icons produced at Sinai. The back of the icon shows crosses within medallions, a decoration found in other twelfth-century icons from Sinai, with which this icon has been connected in style, such as the icon of the Annunciation (New York 1997, no. 246, pp. 374–5 [A. Weyl Carr]).

The theme of the Heavenly Ladder is rare in icon painting and was first developed in illuminated manuscripts with this popular text in the late eleventh century onwards (Vat. Gr. 394, Sinai cod. 418).

MARIA VASSILAKI

# Endnotes

## The Art of Byzantium: 330–1453

(pages 34–43)

- 1 Cameron 2006.
- 2 Cormack 2000a, p. 125.
- 3 Stewart 2008, pp. 139–42.
- 4 Weitzmann 1979, p. 213.
- 5 Barber and Jenkins 2006.
- 6 Maguire 1995a.
- 7 Pentcheva 2006.
- 8 Cormack 1997.
- 9 Belting 1994.
- 10 Mango 1972, p. 186.

## 1 The Beginnings of Christian Art

(pages 44–63)

- 1 Mango 1985.
- 2 Dalgic 2008.
- 3 Bagnall 1982.
- 4 On the problem of dating catacomb painting, see De Bruyne 1968, Bisconti 1994, Guyon 1994 and Salvadori 2002, Appendix II: 'The Chronology of Paleochristian Funerary Painting in Rome'.
- 5 On Christian attitudes towards images in the first centuries, see Finney 1994.
- 6 Frankfurter 1998.
- 7 Mathews 2003; Andaloro 2006, pp. 114–24.
- 8 Schlatter 1989.
- 9 Rouse 1902.

## 2 From Constantine to Iconoclasm

(pages 64–109)

- 1 Friedländer 1912, p. 227.
- 2 MacCormack 1981, pp. 17–89.
- 3 MacCormack 1981, pp. 20, 45, 77–8.
- 4 See Mathews 1993, pp. 41–4.
- 5 Urbana-Champaign 1989, p. 208, no. 129.
- 6 Küllerich 1998, pp. 50, 130, 146–9.
- 7 Vogt 1967, vol. 2, p. 115.
- 8 Vogt 1967, vol. 1, pp. 132–4.
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- 10 New York 1997, pp. 190–1.
- 11 Cameron 1976, pp. 66–8, 106–7, 188–91.
- 12 *Patrologia graeca*, 112, col. 1049.
- 13 Vogt 1967, vol. 1, p. 7.
- 14 Weitzmann 1976, pp. 24–5.
- 15 Kitzinger 1934.
- 16 Buckton 1994, pp. 120–1.
- 17 Delehaye 1910, p. 129.
- 18 Urbana-Champaign 1989.
- 19 Theophanes [1883], p. 405.
- 20 Peers 2004, pp. 35–8.



### 3 At Court (pages 110–139)

- 1 Litavrin 1972, pp. 248–268.
- 2 In Washington DC: Weitzmann 1972a, no. 25.
- 3 In the Grines Gewölbe, Cutler 1994, fig. 226.
- 4 Oikonomides 1995, p. 75.
- 5 For this primary source see Cutler 1994, p. 278, note 87.
- 6 Hahnloser 1971, no. 41 (M. E. Frazer).
- 7 Ševčenko 1994.
- 8 New York 1997, no. 140 (I. Kalavrezou).
- 9 Weitzmann 1976, no. B58.
- 10 Cutler 1994, p. 205 and fig. 222.
- 11 For the textual sources and discussion, see Cutler 1999, p. 696.
- 12 In the Louvre, Paris: New York 1997, no. 29.
- 13 Hahnloser 1971, no. 25 (A. Frolow).
- 14 Frolow 1961, p. 282, no. 245; p. 309, no. 296.
- 15 Buchthal 1974.

### 4.1 At Home: 1 Ceramics of Everyday Life (pages 140–149)

- 1 Hayes 1972.
- 2 Vroom 2003, pp. 331–3.
- 3 Maguire and Dauterman Maguire 2007, pp. 58–96.
- 4 Hayes 1972, figs 51, 54–7, 78, 79.
- 5 Urbana-Champaign 1989, pp. 16–33.
- 6 Vroom 2003, pp. 238–9, 331–3; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2005, pp. 119–20, fig. 5.
- 7 Bakirtzi 1989, pp. 55–65; Sanders 2000, p. 165.
- 8 Hayes 1992, p. 13; Sanders 2003, p. 390.
- 9 Hayes 1992, pp. 35–7; Sanders 2001.
- 10 Hayes 1992, pp. 12–37.
- 11 New York 1997, no. 28, pp. 67–8 (H. C. Evans) and no. 281, pp. 421–2 (P. Soucek).
- 12 Sanders 2000, p. 166; Sanders 2003, p. 394.
- 13 Thessaloniki 1999.
- 14 Balian and Drandaki 2003.
- 15 Thessaloniki 1999, no. 34, p. 48 (T. Tsanana), no. 37, p. 50 (C. Kollakou).
- 16 Thessaloniki 2002, no. 223, pp. 200–1 (M. Michaelidou).
- 17 Thessaloniki 1999, p. 21; Vroom 2003, pp. 238–9, 332–3; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2005, pp. 121–3, fig. 7.
- 18 Thessaloniki 1999, nos 76–110.
- 19 Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2003, pp. 45, 63–4.
- 20 Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2004, pp. 44–5.

### 4.2 At Home: 2 Metalwork of Everyday Life (pages 150–161)

- 1 Dodd 1961, nos 28, 33, 35, 37–9, 54, 58–66, 78 (Cyprus); nos 32, 40–3, 48–50 (Mylene).
- 2 Balian and Drandaki 2003.
- 3 Mundell Mango 2007, pp. 136–9.
- 4 Mundell Mango 2007, pp. 128–33.
- 5 Mundell Mango 2007, p. 140, fig. 14.19.
- 6 Leader-Newby 2004, pp. 159–60.

### 4.3 At Home: 3 Jewellery and Adornment (pages 162–193)

- 1 Yeroulanos 1999 *passim*.
- 2 Verneule 1975, pp. 5–32.
- 3 Ross 1965, nos 1–4; Grabar 1951; Demison 1918; Stylianou and Stylianou 1964; Athens 1964, pp. 322–6, 378–88; Thessaloniki 1997a, no. 222, pp. 222–33.
- 4 Dallas 1984, pp. 109–67.
- 5 New York 1997, no. 145, p. 187; Athens 2001, pp. 70–1, 78–83.
- 6 Delivrias 1999, pp. 357–470.

### 5 At Church (pages 194–247)

- 1 For a good introduction to Byzantine religion, see Cunningham 2002. For more on the material discussed here, Safran 1998 is recommended and Mathews 1997 touches on similar themes.
- 2 Gregory's comment came in Florence at the time of the Council of Ferrara in 1438. Quoted in Sylvester Syropoulos, *Iera historia*, p. 109; translation from Mango 1986.
- 3 This phrase was used by the eighth-century patriarch, Germanos: see Germanos (1984).
- 4 For church architecture, see Mango 1978; Krautheimer 1986; Ousterhout 1998, Ousterhout 1999.
- 5 The Twelve Great Feasts are the Birth of the Mother of God, the Presentation of the Mother of God, the Annunciation, the Nativity, Epiphany, the Presentation, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Entry into Jerusalem, Ascension, Pentecost, the Koimesis, or death, of the Mother of God, and the Exaltation of the Cross. However, these Twelve Great Feasts do not always match the scenes which dominate in art after the eleventh century: the Annunciation, the Nativity, Epiphany, the Presentation, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Raising of Lazarus, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Crucifixion, the Anastasis or Resurrection, Pentecost, the Ascension. See Demus 1948 and Kitzinger 1988.
- 6 For images in the church, see Mathews 1988 and Maguire 1998.
- 7 Russian envoys in Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, pp. 110–11.
- 8 Ševčenko 1998.
- 9 In a small-scale survey of the saints in 23 Middle Byzantine churches, 175 different saints appeared. None appeared in all 23 churches. Only 75 appeared more than twice; 36 appeared twice and 64 once. This may just be chance of survival but it may also reflect an enormous diversity in which saints appeared in churches: see James 1994.
- 10 For liturgical silver, see Boyd 1998.

### 6 Icons (pages 248–278)

- 1 Chatzidakis 1962; Weitzmann 1978; Bacci 2000a, pp. 79–99.
- 2 Translation by Robin Cormack. St John Damascene, *De imag. Orit. III*, paragraph 16, *Patrologia graeca*, 94, pp. 1337ff. (see also Mango 1972, p. 171); see too *Patrologia graeca*, 50, p. 516 (St John Chrysostom), *Patrologia graeca*, 3, p. 373 (Pseudo-Dionysius); Mango 1972, pp. 137–8, 169–72; Cormack 1997.
- 3 Grabar 1975; Durand 2004a; New York 2004, nos 152, 153, 154.
- 4 They are represented in a twelfth-century icon in the Sinai monastery: see Carr 2002, pp. 75–108, figs 1, 2, 6 and Athens 2000, figs 82, 87, 88, 90.
- 5 Ševčenko 1991; Carr 2000.
- 6 Vocotopoulos 1995, p. 102, no. 82.
- 7 Vocotopoulos 1995, pp. 58–63, nos 33–40; Sinai Treasures 1990, figs 20–2, 25–7, 31–3; New York 2004, no. 235.
- 8 Vocotopoulos 1995, p. 67, no. 44; for another example, see p. 137, no. 116.
- 9 Vocotopoulos 1995, p. 47, no. 21.
- 10 Vocotopoulos 1995, pp. 66, 68, 69, nos 43, 45, 46.
- 11 Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1966a; Carr 1995a; Vocotopoulos 1999.
- 12 Papazotos 1966; Tsigaridas 1988; Avignon 2004.
- 13 Vocotopoulos 1995, nos 118–22; Thessaloniki 1997c, nos 2.8–11, 2.8–20, pp. 67–73, 82–7 (E. Tsigaridas).
- 14 Manoussacas 1960–61; Vassilaki 1981; Vassilaki 1994.

### 7 Byzantium and the West (pages 274–303)

- 1 Bacci 2003, p. 237.
- 2 Paris 2001b; Krause 2004; Klein 2004a.
- 3 Kalavrezou 1997.
- 4 Hugh of St Victor, *De arca Noe mystica*, IV (*Patrologia graeca*, 126, col. 686).
- 5 Stubblebine 1966; Weitzmann 1984a; Belting 1990a; Derbes 1996; Chastel 1999; Pace 2000; Derbes and Neff 2004; Vassilopoulos 2004; Bacci 2007.
- 6 Panofsky 1927; Belting 1981; Derbes 1996; Wolf 2002, pp. 160–92.
- 7 Theophilus, *De diversis artibus*, I.1, ed. Dodwell 1961, p. 4.
- 8 Koehler 1941; Demus 1970; Weitzmann 1966a; Kitzinger 1966; Kitzinger 1970; Wixom 1997; Chastel 1999.
- 9 Crivello 2007.
- 10 See especially Venice 1974; Demus 1984 (Venice), and Demus 1950; Kitzinger 1990; Pace 1994; Pace 1997; Tronzo 1997; Andaloro 1998 (Sicily).
- 11 Brubaker 2004.
- 12 Durand 2004a.
- 13 Cormack 2000a, pp. 196–7.
- 14 Pace 1982; Calò Mariani 1984; Pace 1986a; Bari 1988; Falla Castelfranchi 1991; Pace 1994; Pace 1997; Calò Mariani 2002; Pace 2003.
- 15 Živkov 2001.
- 16 Folda 2005; Jacoby 2004.
- 17 Dodd 2004; Helou 2006; Immerzeel 2007.
- 18 Carr 2005.
- 19 Kollias 1994; de Vaivre 2004.
- 20 Chatzidakis 2000.

### 9 The Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai (pages 356–375)

- 1 Wilkinson 1999, pp. 108–12.
- 2 Grossmann 1990, pp. 30–4.
- 3 Ševčenko 2006a; Ševčenko 2006b, pp. 118–20.
- 4 Ševčenko 2006a; Drandaki 2006.
- 5 Jacoby 2006, pp. 82–9.
- 6 Jacoby 2006, pp. 85–9.
- 7 Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1956–58.
- 8 Weitzmann 1976.
- 9 Uspensky 1850.
- 10 These are the icons of the Virgin and Child, St John the Baptist, SS. Sergios and Bacchos and St Platon with an unidentified female saint; Weitzmann 1976, nos B.2, B.9, B.11, and B.15, pp. 15–18, 28–30, 32–5, 38–40, pls III, XII, XIV, XLII, LII, LIII, LVII and LXI.
- 11 Weitzmann 1976, nos B.1, B.3, B.5, pp. 13–15, 18–21, 23–6, pls I–II, IV–VI, VIII–X, XXXIX–XLII, XLIII–XLVI, XLVIII–LI. Chatzidakis 1967a. Most recently Mathews 2006, pp. 39–55 and the same in Los Angeles 2006, no. 1, pp. 122–3.
- 12 See Mathews 2006, pp. 39–55 and no. 1, pp. 122–3, no. 3, pp. 126–7.
- 13 Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1956–58, vol. 1, figs 136–43, 146–51, vol. 2, pp. 121–3, 125–30; Cutler and Spicer 1996, pl. 310; Athens 2000, pls 87–88, 90.
- 14 Los Angeles 2006, nos 28–9, pp. 190–3 (G. Parpulov).
- 15 Mouriki 1988; Los Angeles 2006, no. 53, pp. 259–61 (G. Parpulov).
- 16 Mouriki 1990, p. 123, fig. 73; Cormack 2000a, p. 44, fig. 7; Los Angeles 2006, no. 57, pp. 268–9 (R. Corrie).
- 17 Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1972a; Weitzmann et al. 1982, pp. 201–35.
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- 19 Drandaki 1990, pp. 126–8, figs 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82.
- 20 Herakleion 1990, no. 4, pp. 156–85 (M. Vassilaki), no. 5, pp. 186–91 (M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides); Constantoudaki-Kitromilides 1995; Vassilaki 1995.

- 21 Delidakis and Vemi 2006.
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- 26 Enlart 1925–26; Buchthal 1957; Folda 1976; Boase 1977; Kuhnel 1994; Folda 1995a; Folda 2005.
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- 28 Westphalen 2007.
- 29 Bacci 2006, p. 216.
- 30 Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1966a; Weitzmann 1972a; Pace 1984; Cormack and Mihalarias 1984; Mouriki 1990; Folda 1992; Pace 1993; Hunt 1998; Zeidler 2000; Georgopoulou 2004b; Folda 2005.

### 8 Beyond Byzantium (pages 306–365)

- 1 Constantine Porphyrogenetos 1967.
- 2 Mango 1976, pp. 173–4.
- 3 Karski 1926, pp. 107–8; trans. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, p. 111.
- 4 For a discussion of the date of Armenia's conversion, see London 2001, pp. 19–24.
- 5 Eastmond and Jones 2001, pp. 146–91.
- 6 Mathews and Daskalakis 1997, pp. 475–84.
- 7 Qaqqehchishvili 1955, pp. 282, 290; trans. Thomson 1998, pp. 374–6.
- 8 Martin-Hisard 1996, pp. 239–48.
- 9 Dulaurier and Macler 1917, p. 132; Maranci 2003.
- 10 Choniates 1975, p. 371; trans. Magoulas 1984, p. 205; Fine 1987, pp. 10–17.
- 11 Kinnamos 1836, pp. 287–8; trans. Brand 1976, p. 280.
- 12 Eastmond 2003a.
- 13 Privalova 1980.
- 14 Compare Redford 1996, pp. 119–35 and Steppan 1995 for arguments about place of origin.
- 15 Azatian 1987; Rogers 1972, pp. 77–119.
- 16 The most extensive first-hand account of these encounters between the Franciscans and the Mongols is that of William of Rubruck 1990; Kouymjian 2006, pp. 305–24.
- 17 Vzdornov 1983.
- 18 Pentecheva 2006, pp. 105–43.







# Glossary

ROBIN CORMACK

## Acheiropoietos

Not made by human hands, and so miraculously produced.

## achiname

Document on which the outline of the hand of Mohammed is imprinted, together with the clauses of protection he granted.

## adventus

Official ceremony welcoming the arrival and reception of an emperor or officials into a city. The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem was seen as an *adventus*.

## ambo

A prominent raised platform, usually made of marble, in the nave of the church, from which the Gospel was read in the liturgy. It was also used in other parts of the services, not only for recitations of the psalms and prayers but also for special ceremonial, such as the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September.

## Anastasis

'Resurrection': the Easter image of the Orthodox Church, showing Christ breaking down the Gates of Hell and releasing Old Testament figures who believed in him before the Incarnation.

## appliqué

A smaller ornament or device applied to another surface, for example a textile.

## baldachin *see* ciborium

## Basileus

Principal title of the Byzantine emperor.

## bema

The sanctuary in an Orthodox church.

## bezel

Focal point of a ring, distinct from the hoop, often engraved with a design such as a monogram, or inlaid with a stone.

## cabochon

A gemstone cut and polished to a rounded shape, without facets.

## champlevé

An enamelling technique in which cells are carved into a metal object and filled with vitreous enamel and then fired.

## chiton

The main element of Byzantine dress, a tunic worn by men and women in varying lengths and materials.

## chlamys

A mantle or short cloak, a main element of court dress.

## ciborium

A domed or pyramidal canopy, supported by columns, covering a tomb, the altar or other sacred space.

## clavus

A vertical stripe, often purple or gold, decorating a tunic.

## cloisonné

An enamelling technique differing from *champlevé*. The cells are created by soldering metal strips to the surface of the object and the vitreous enamel is poured into these before it sets.

## colobium

A long, sleeveless garment worn by Christ at the Crucifixion; after iconoclasm he is more usually shown wearing a loincloth.

## confraternity

A lay organisation, sometimes to help in the cult of icons.

## Deisis

Literally a prayer or petition, the term is often used to refer to the composition of Christ with the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist.

## diakonikon

The space, often a chapel, to the right of the sanctuary that acted as the sacristy.

## ekphrasis

A literary description of a work of art.

## enkolpion

Reliquary with a sacred image or relic worn at the breast. Sometimes called a necklace, pendant or pectoral.

## epigonation

A stiff gold-embroidered piece of cloth that hung from the girdle to the knee.

## epitrachelion

An embroidered strip of cloth worn around the neck by priests, the equivalent to the Western stole.

## Etimasia

The empty Throne prepared for the Last Judgment.

## fibula

A brooch for fastening a tunic at the shoulder.

## gesso

Powdered form of calcium carbonate which, mixed with glue, was used as an absorbent primer coat for egg tempera.

## globus cruciger

A globe surmounted by a cross, typically part of the emperor's insignia.

## himation

A mantle or outer garment.

## Hodegetria

One of the commonest icon types in which the Virgin and Child are represented with Mary pointing to the Child. From the period of iconoclasm, it was believed that the first image of this type was painted from the life by St Luke the Evangelist.

## iconoclasm

The period from c.730 to 787 and 815 to 843 during which figurative images were banned from churches, and existing works of art were destroyed or concealed.

## iconoclast

A supporter of iconoclasm, who denied the holiness of religious images.

## iconophile (or iconodoule)

An opponent of iconoclasm, who venerated images.

## iconostasis

A high screen with icons developed in Late Byzantium.

## indiction

The tax year (1 September to 31 August), which was numbered in cycles of 15, starting from 312.

## katholikon

The main church of a monastery, usually dedicated to the patron saint of the foundation.

## Koimesis

The 'Falling Asleep' of the Virgin Mary, when her soul was taken up to heaven (festival day 15 August).

## lectionary

A liturgical book containing texts used at services, arranged according to the Church calendar.

## liturgy

In Byzantium, the Eucharistic rite, often called the Divine Liturgy.

## loros

A long, jewelled scarf worn on special occasions by the emperor and by archangels attending Christ.

## mandorla

A pointed oval surrounding the figure of Christ or the Virgin, indicative of God's power.

## Mandylion

The miraculous image of the face of Christ on a cloth which was legendarily sent to cure King Abgar of Edessa, and which was taken to Constantinople in 944.

## maphorion

A long shawl worn over the head and shoulders and typically part of the dress of the Virgin Mary.

## martyrium

A special building made to commemorate an event from the life of Christ or the death of a martyr.

## Menologion

A collection of saints' lives arranged according to their commemoration in the Church year, which started on 1 September.

## minsourion

A large silver plate.

## missorium

A large plate as part of table service, or for display.

## naos

A church or the nave of a church where the congregation stood.

## narthex

The transverse vestibule of a church, sometimes used for baptismal or funerary services, and the place for penitents.

## niello

A black metal alloy of sulphide copper silver and lead, used as a decorative inlay, especially on silver.

## nimbus/nimbate

A halo worn by Christ, saints and even emperors and their wives. Only Christ has the cross nimbus.

## omophorion

A long white scarf worn by a bishop.

## opus intarsile

Pierced-work technique in gold.

## orans/orant

A position in which a figure is depicted frontally with both arms upraised.

## orarion

A narrow white silk stole worn by a deacon while officiating.

## paludamentum

A military cloak similar in form to the chlamys, when worn by an emperor fastened on the right shoulder with a circular brooch (fibula).

## Panagia

'All-Holy': the usual epithet of the Virgin Mary or Mother of God in Byzantium.

## Parousia

The Second Coming of Christ.

## patera

A broad shallow dish.

## pendilia

Decorative elements composed of ornamented chains or wires suspended from a crown.

## phelonion

Outer liturgical garment worn by priests.

## Proskynesis

Literally 'prostration'. An act of supplication or reverence, particularly in front of Christ, icons and the emperor.

## prothesis

The space to the left of the sanctuary, often a chapel, where the bread and wine were prepared for the liturgy.

## pteruges

A kilt of leather or metal strips worn below a cuirass.

## pyxis

Box.

## repoussé

A metalworking technique in which the design is raised in relief by hammering from behind.

## revetment

A covering – in marble if for decorating walls and in gold and silver if for covers – to enhance icons.

## rinceau

A decoration often in the form of a vine scroll.

## sakkos

An outer liturgical vestment worn by bishops instead of the priest's phelonion, usually heavily embroidered; it is derived from imperial dress.

## sgraffito

Literally scratched; two successive layers of contrasting slip are applied to an unfired ceramic, and scratched to produce an outline drawing with the different colours.

## slip

An aqueous suspension of a mixture of clays and other minerals such as quartz, feldspar and mica.

## staurotheke

A reliquary preserving a fragment of the True Cross of the Crucifixion, reputedly found by St Helena on Golgotha.

## sticharion

A long tunic worn by a deacon and the higher clergy.

## tablion

A rectangular decorated panel attached to the edge of chlamys.

## templon

A screen to separate the sanctuary from the nave, developed after the sixth century and comprising an epistyle supported on columns and panels at floor level.

## Tree of Life

Mentioned in the Book of Genesis as the potential source of immortality to Adam and Eve, and used symbolically in Byzantine art.

## tyche

A personification of good fortune as protector of a city.

## typikon

A monastic typikon contains the charter and rules and regulations of the community; the typikon of St Sophia contained the liturgical rites of the Church.



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